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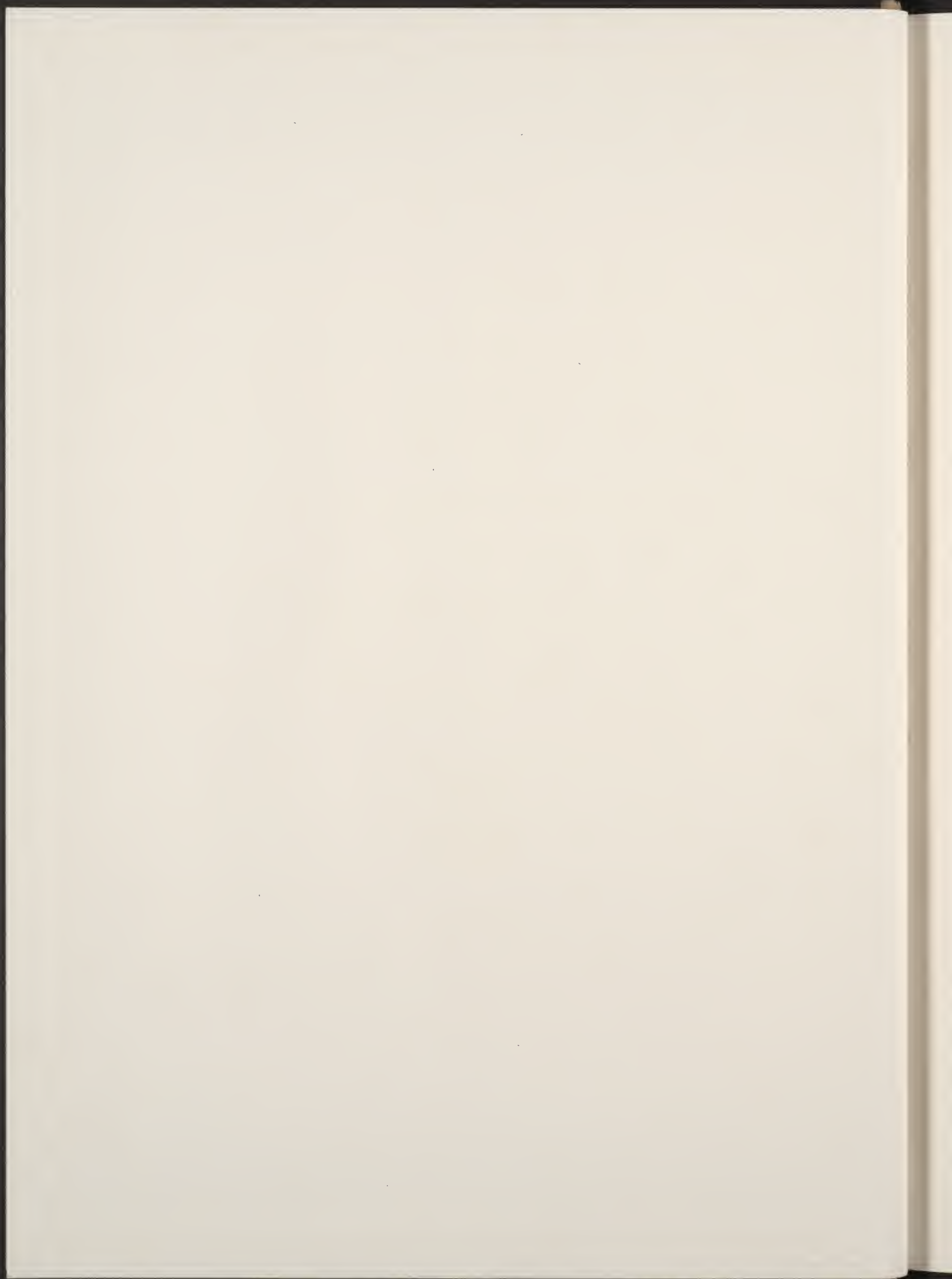
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# JAPAN

DESCRIBED AND ILLUSTRATED BY THE JAPANESE

Written by

Eminent Japanese Authorities and Scholars

Edited by Captain F Brinkley of Tokyo Japan

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With an Essay on Japanese Art by Kakuzo Okakura

Director of the Imperial Art School at Tokyo Japan



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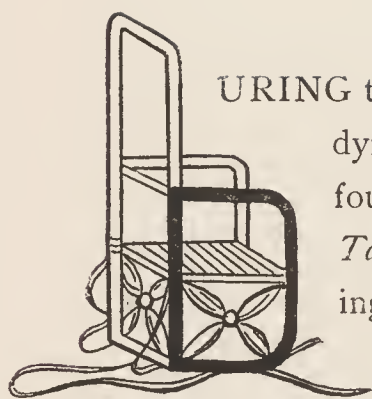






## VI.

### MEDIÆVAL JAPAN.



URING the close of the ninth century China was in the throes of one of those dynastic struggles that have convulsed her twenty-three times during the four thousand five hundred years of her recorded existence as a State. The *Tang* sovereigns, after nearly three centuries of brilliant administration, during which their empire had come to be regarded as the great conquering and civilizing power of the Asiatic continent, were losing their grasp of the huge dominion subdued and consolidated by the illustrious Tai-tsung.

It was at that time that the Japanese government resolved to abandon the habit of sending embassies to the Chinese Court. There had been practically no interruption in the despatch of such envoys since the second century, though their frequency had been limited, of course, by the difficulties of an enterprise involving nearly a year's travel, by the disturbances that attended the rise and fall of ruling houses in the Middle Kingdom, and by domestic tumults in Japan. From Michizane, one of the two Chief Ministers, came the suggestion that official intercourse between the neighboring empires should cease. Michizane was one of Japan's great men; one of her greatest, indeed, in the opinion of many critics. He died in exile, under circumstances of picturesque pathos that appealed strongly to the romantic sentiment of his countrymen, and his unmerited sufferings were compensated by apotheosis at the hands of later generations under the title of *Tenjin-sama*, "the heavenly deity." It need scarcely be said that he was a renowned calligraphist. No man could attain a position of leadership in mediæval Japan unless his sense of proportion and intensity of study were attested by ideographic skill. He was also an artist, a *littérateur*, and, above all, a profound politician. His advice that the despatch of embassies to China should be discontinued, is historically attributed to the internal disorder prevailing at the moment in that country, and to the futility of sending envoys who to serious risks *en route* might add the embarrassment of finding, at the end of their journey, that they had been accredited to the representative of a dethroned dynasty. But a suggestion based on such arguments could have had only temporary value, and, moreover, would probably have shared the discredit of its author's subsequent degradation and exile had it not been reënforced by some motive of national importance.

It is more than probable that in Michizane's time the Japanese had learned to appreciate the significance attached by China to their missions, and had perceived that every embassy sent by them to the Court of the Middle Kingdom was there recorded as an



additional proof of their country's vassalage. Between the year 238 A. D. and the date (894) of Michizane's advice, Japan accredited twenty-eight embassies to the Chinese Court. During the same interval China's embassies to Japan totalled three. There was no semblance of reciprocal courtesy. The Emperor Wu Ti (421 A. D.), graciously eulogizing the arrival of a



SANJO STREET, KYOTO.

On the bank of the Kamogawa.

Japanese envoy, issued a manifesto: "The distant loyalty of Tsan of Wo merits notice. Let some office be bestowed on him." In 631, His Majesty Tai-tsung, observing the great distance that the Japanese ambassador had to travel, gave orders that "annual tribute should not be insisted on," and sent a magistrate of Shan-tung to "preach a homily" to the islanders.

If national sentiment had any existence in Japan in those early centuries, the lofty condescension of the Chinese rulers could not fail to be resented. The paramount respect paid to Michizane's policy is thus easily understood. Not the hardship of the journey to Singan, nor yet the uncertainty of its results, was his real motive. He saw no reason why Japan should continue to humiliate herself, and the justice of his view was acknowledged in practice by subsequent sovereigns of Japan, for from that time the despatch of official embassies to China ceased completely. Naturally this interruption of official intercourse is not directly recorded in Chinese annals. The first reference that we find there is indirect. In the year 1026, a Japanese local official arrived at Ming-chow (modern Ningpo), carrying various presents. He was probably an envoy from one of the territorial magnates who were beginning at that epoch to acquire and exercise autonomic power within the limits of the districts administered by them. We read in Ma Twan-lin's history, as translated by Mr. Parker, that "since this envoy was not provided with an address from the Japanese government, the Emperor ordered his presents to be declined, and from that date the Japanese did not send tribute to the Chinese Court." It is easy to reconcile the discrepancy between the statements of the Chinese and the Japanese annalists.

Cessation of official relations did not appreciably affect the literary, commercial and religious intercourse between the two empires. It must be recorded to China's credit that

she showed herself liberal and courteous in those mediæval days. Priests and *literati* coming from Japan were handsomely entertained and sympathetically treated. Supplies were given to Japanese boats driven by stress of weather into Chinese ports. Castaways were furnished with food and money and sent back to their country. No serious obstacles were placed in the way of trade. Chinese vessels passed to Japan, and Japanese ships, such as they were, occasionally made their way to Soochow. But the commerce thus established was fitful and insignificant. Buddhism was the great civilizing factor of the era. Introduced from China in the beginning of the sixth century, it failed at first to take root in Japanese soil. Fifty years later, however, propagandists from Korea succeed in planting the new creed firmly. Thenceforth its growth was practically uninterrupted. One of the most recent developments of Japanese character has been independence of official initiative. Only within the past decade have the people ceased to look to the government for guidance in almost everything lying beyond the realm of domestic concerns. In feudal and ante-feudal times the aristocratic and military orders were implicitly credited with a monopoly of learning, intelligence and sagacity. Thus the Imperial Court's profound and public allegiance to Buddhism from the era of the Emperor Kimmei (540-572 A. D.) placed the imported faith beyond the range of popular opposition. At the close of the seventh century, any household neglecting to provide a domestic altar for the veneration of Tathâgata, violated an Imperial ordinance.

In the early part of the eighth, each province was required to build a place of worship and a monastery. Almost every leader of thought, every literary celebrity, every political magnate, prayed to Buddha for his own prosperity, and intrusted to Buddhist priests the custody of his ancestral cenotaphs and the tendance of his family tomb. Such patronage



A GROUP OF SERVANTS AT A JAPANESE HOTEL.

would have established any creed among a people so obedient to impulses from above. But Buddhism had other titles to general esteem. Associated with its name was the first charity hospital established in Kyoto. The mother of an Emperor and his consort, taught by the tenets of Sidathra, devoted themselves to works of mercy, and, with the sovereign's co-opera-



tion, founded and equipped an institution where the poor received medical treatment and medicines gratis. An asylum for the support of the destitute was also among the works of these philanthropists, and they organized a system for the nourishment of foundlings, as well as for the general relief of the poor and the distressed. We are writing of the period known as the Nara epoch, the interval between the years 710 and 794 A. D., and of the Emperor Shomu, who reigned from 724 to 749. The dates are striking. Eleven hundred and fifty years ago a Japanese ruler and two Japanese Imperial ladies turned their attention to such things as charity hospitals, poorhouses and foundling asylums.

Western tourists in Japan do not fail to visit Nara or to admire its gorgeous temples and its colossal image of Buddha, made of copper and gold. Few remember, however, that they there behold monuments dating from the time when Charles Martel fought Saracens in France, and the Lombards were beginning to form duchies in Italy. Already at that remote epoch Buddhism had become to the Japanese a message of mercy and a promoter of civilization. Opulent grandees, following the example of the Court, spent vast sums on the building and endowment of temples, dedicated their sons to the priesthood, or took the tonsure themselves when the pressure of years began to detach them from love and ambition. It is related of Coifi, Edwin's chief priest, that when questioned by the King as to the relative merits of the old idolatry and the monotheism of Christianity, he frankly declared in favor of the latter, because his unwearying service to the gods of heathendom had brought him no special promotion at the hands of his king nor any signal success in his worldly undertakings. There is no doubt that something of the same self-interested spirit turned men's faces towards Buddhism from the Nara epoch onward. Prosperity for the worshipper, peace for the nation, were blessings supposed to be in Amida's gift. As for the priests, they applied themselves to promote the people's material welfare not less zealously than they labored to propagate the doctrines of their creed. Constantly visiting China, they studied whatever of science or art that highly civilized country had to teach, and, returning to Japan, they travelled throughout the length and breadth of the realm, imparting the knowledge they had acquired. At their instance and under their instruction works of irrigation were undertaken; extensive tracts of land were brought under cultivation; roads were constructed; rivers bridged; canals excavated; navigation encouraged; painting, sculpture and ceramics carried into new directions; metallurgic processes developed and applied to the casting and chiselling of idols in gold and bronze; glass-making and soap-boiling taught, though neither was destined to become popular. In short, the priestly representatives of Buddhism contributed quite as largely to the material progress of the nation as to its moral improvement. Of the value of education as an indirect propagator of their creed they had just as clear a perception as the Christian of the nineteenth century has. The educational institutions that they established or conducted find their exact counterpart in the educational institutions founded and maintained with Christian mission funds in Japan to-day. It was at their instance that the

### A GROUP OF BOYS AND GIRLS.

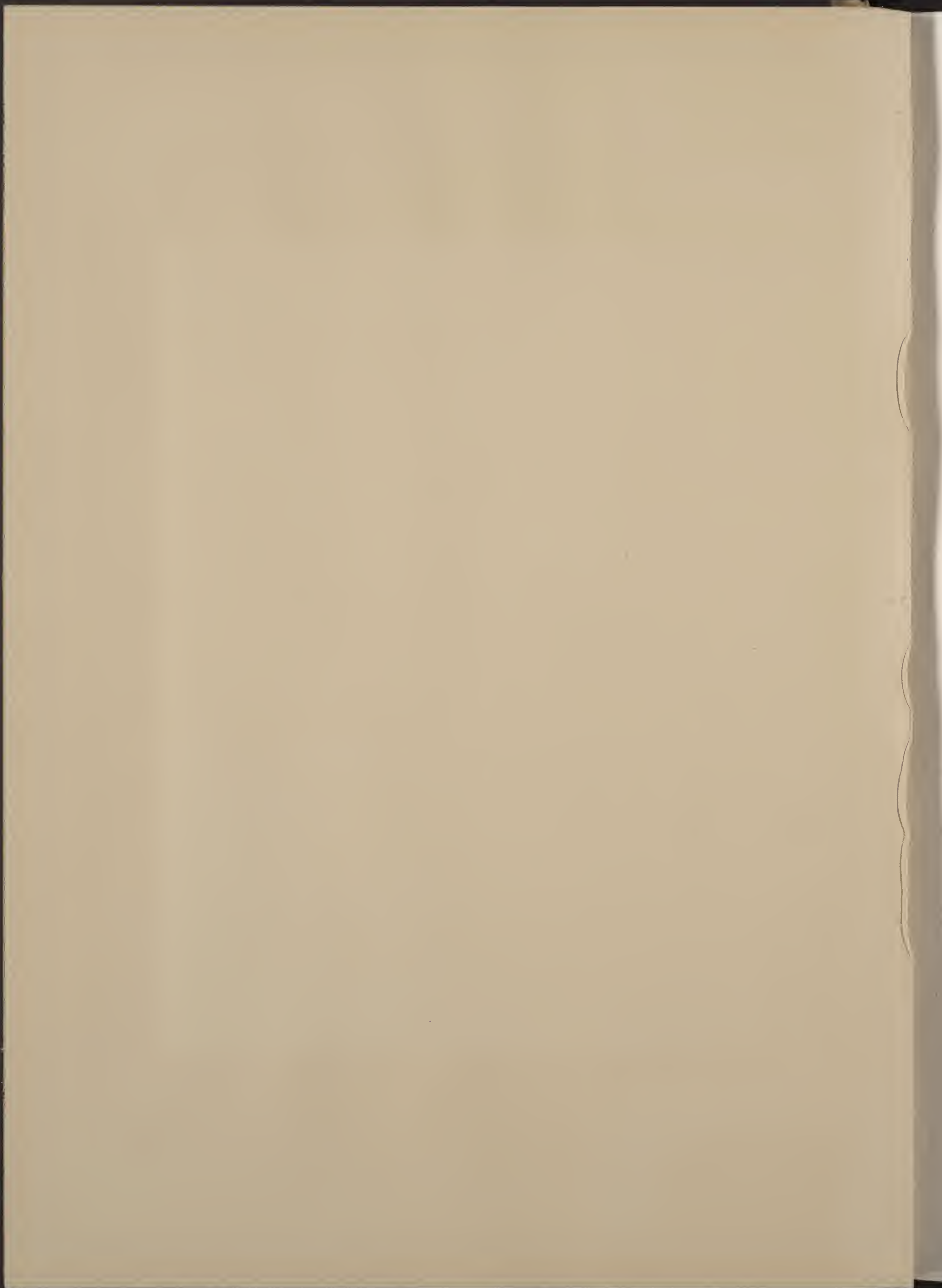
The Japanese smile is often referred to as merely a superficial expression, which does not fairly indicate the disposition of the wearer. It is so easy to cause the smile to ripple into merry laughter, that it is quite evident a happy and amiable temperament is responsible for both. The young people in the accompanying plate were grouped for the purpose of being photographed with the aid of a flash light, and received the customary suggestion to "look pleasant."











Emperor Tenchi (668-672) appointed the first Japanese officials charged with the duty of superintending and organizing machinery of instruction. At their instance the same sovereign established a university in Kyoto and public schools at various provincial centres. Later on, during the *Heian* epoch (794 to 1186 A. D.), the influence of the Court was exercised still more vigorously and continuously in the cause of education, and great nobles began to disburse large sums for the establishment of schools and colleges. It is true that an element of selfishness also made itself occasionally apparent: some of these institutions were intended solely for the instruction of the members of special clans, as the Fujiwara, the Tachibana, and so forth, just as some of the colleges founded in Tokyo during the past thirty years are intended to be nurseries of recruits for this or that political faction.

The subjects taught at the schools of the *Nara* and *Heian* epochs were called the four paths of learning (*Shi-do*)—the Chinese classics, history, law and mathematics, the first of which alone covered any wide range. By history is to be understood chiefly the history of China. In the records of Chinese rulers, captains, philosophers and *literati*, Japanese students, down to a comparatively recent period, found all their types of majesty, power, wisdom and erudition. To be able to quote a Chinese precedent was to have justification for any act, a model in any emergency. One effect of this devotion to Chinese learning and respect for Chinese systems was that the profession of arms began to fall into disfavor. In China the soldier had always been counted an inferior being. The first Chinese force despatched (110 B. C.) to the invasion of Korea consisted chiefly of criminals. Towards the close of the *Heian* era, literary culture, the elaboration of codes of etiquette, the pursuit of pastimes often of the most trivial and *banal* character, engrossed the attention of the upper classes in Japan. To be an accomplished ideographist became a matter of much greater importance than to be a skilled swordsman or an accurate archer. Men and women robed in silks of delicate texture and glowing colors were to be seen in spring floating wine-cups on streams that swept through parks beautifully laid out, and past



A PILGRIM.



mansions magnificent even according to modern standards; or in summer, seated in gayly decorated boats, composing couplets and making music; or, at the passing of winter, wandering on hills among rockeries and cascades to pull up young pine trees by the roots. The manners and customs of that age—the age immediately preceding the rise of military feudalism—have been described by learned Japanese historians of recent date. The rude and unpolished but frugal and industrious habits of the *Nara* epoch underwent gradual change as the *Heian* era tended to its close. Instead of exercises for developing manly vigor and soldierly skill, luxurious indulgence and effeminate display became the fashion.

The metropolis—Kyoto, or Heian-jo as it was called—was the centre of magnificence and the focus of pleasure. The princes and great nobles built for themselves dwellings scarcely less imposing than the sovereign's palace. Every aristocratic abode consisted of a number of buildings on the construction and furnishing of which great sums were lavished. Within the principal gate stood places for vehicles, and farther on a second gate gave entrance to an enclosure inside which the main edifice stood. On its east and west, as well as behind it, were buildings for the use of members of the family, for retainers, and for the discharge of the various services connected with the household. Corridors connected these wings with the main edifice, and the whole was surrounded by a park which, with its rockeries, shrubberies, cascades, lakes, forests of flowering trees, and deftly contrived vistas, showed that the art of landscape gardening had already reached a high stage of development. The residence of the chief minister of state was constructed after the model of one of the Imperial palaces, the *Seiryō-den*, or hall of cool freshness,—a fact which loses something of its arrogant suggestiveness when we remember that the puissant Fujiwara prince, Michinaga, who held that post at the close of the tenth century, had the honor of seeing his three daughters become the consorts of three consecutive sovereigns. The inmates of these imposing structures led lives consonant with their surroundings. Sumptuary rules had been issued by the government prescribing the color and quality of the garments to be worn by the occupants of the various official posts or the holders of certain official ranks. But little attention was paid to such ordinances in the *Heian* epoch. Officials, courtiers and their families engaged in a competition of luxury and display. Rich brocades, elaborately embroidered silks, finely woven crêpes, and all fabrics that the loom or the needle could furnish, whether of domestic, Chinese or Korean manufacture, were included in the wardrobes of the upper classes. The ox-cars, or portly sedan chairs, in which aristocrats went abroad, shone with lacquer and with elaborately chiselled ornaments of gold and silver, and their occupants sat shrouded from public gaze by curtains of delicately meshed bamboo. Moral attainments or practical experience constituted no title to office or preferment. To be born in one of the privileged families was the sole passport to success. In the Imperial Court, on spring mornings or under the autumnal moon, reunions were held, when the guests vied with one another in making music and composing poetry.

At the close of the ninth century, five fête days were established, which have been observed ever since with unabating earnestness: the third day of the third month, the fifth of the fifth month, the seventh of the seventh month and the ninth of the ninth month, and to these were added the festival of the "late moonlight" (thirteenth of the ninth month) and that of the "last chrysanthemums." Among games played indoors, checkers (*go*)—a pastime demanding more skill than chess—and a kind of dice (*sugoroku*) were much in vogue; and the favorite outdoor sports were football, polo, hawking, horse-racing and equestrian archery. At wine-feasts various kinds of songs, some classical, some popular, were chanted with accompaniment of sundry musical instruments and dancing, and Chinese and Japanese stanzas were composed and sung. Between the close of the eleventh century and the middle of the twelfth these luxurious habits reached their acme. The importance of personal adornment received such recognition that men began to paint their eyebrows and blacken their teeth, after the fashion of married women, provoking the wits of the time to compare them to puppets set up at festivals, or to apply to them such names as "lunar courtiers" and "elegants from cloudland." That great laxity of morals prevailed amid so much luxury of life and indulgence of the senses, may be easily imagined; and if occasionally a temple was built or endowed by some wealthy magnate, motives of piety had less influence in prompting the act than the conviction that the chanting of litanies and the burning of incense were potent to secure prosperity in this world and happiness in the next.

Very different was the condition of the lower orders, especially in provincial districts. Their lives were rough and uncivilized in comparison with the luxury and refinement that existed among the patri-cians. They still inhabited rude, lowly dwellings, thatched with straw or boards, devot-



OYAMA IN PROVINCE OF SAGAMI

Near Yokohama: pilgrims flock here in June to worship Buddhist relics.

ing themselves chiefly to agriculture and, on a small scale, to industrial enterprise. Every man, on attaining the age of twenty-one, was required to perform annually ten days' labor for public purposes, or to commute that *corvée* by payment of a roll of hempen cloth. The farmer handed over five per cent of the gross produce of his land to meet the expenses



of local administration, and the fisherman, the weaver, the sericulturist and all other producers contributed a percentage of their staples to the support of the central government. No person might travel in the interior without a hand-bell, which he was expected to ring as he progressed, or without a passport, which he had to submit for inspection at guardhouses situated in all important localities. The art of road-making, though greatly developed through the intelligent and benevolent efforts of Buddhist priests, was still in a very backward condition, and means of conveyance, in common with inns and hostelries, were virtually non-existent. It is true that relays of post-horses were maintained along the principal routes, and that their use, as well as arrangements relating to carriers, formed the subject of special regulations. But such provisions concerned the convenience of the upper classes and of officials alone; they conferred no benefit on the plebeian. If he desired to journey, he had no choice but to carry on his own back whatever food he might want on the way, and even the utensils necessary for cooking purposes. At night, shelter had to be sought in buildings attached to temples and shrines, and even before sunset the highway robber was an object of constant dread. Naturally a water way was selected in preference to a road, wherever selection was possible; but whether poling down a river or coasting along a shore, the traveller could not count on immunity from pirates.

Superstitions traceable to China, where they still prevail, had a strong hold upon the people in the eras of which we write, namely, up to the twelfth century. They will be referred to in a subsequent chapter.

In the year 697 A. D., an extensive programme of administrative and judicial reform was elaborated, and four years later it obtained public expression in a body of laws known as the *Taikwa* statutes. The promulgation of this remarkable code marked the inauguration of an era of progress scarcely less important than the adoption of Occidental civilization in 1867. Fifty-seven years were required to give full effect to the laws, and in many respects the improvements wrought by them did not fall short of the legislators' hopes. But with some traditional abuses they proved powerless to cope. Death and disease still continued to be associated by the lower orders with an idea of pollution or evil omen, so that a traveller falling sick by the way was often left to perish untended; persons stricken with mortal illness were sometimes thrust out of doors lest their corpses should contaminate the house, and servants suffering from incurable maladies were abandoned to a destitute fate. It is scarcely conceivable that habits so inhuman should have prevailed among the ancestors of the modern Japanese, whose kindly care of the sick and tender treatment of the dead must be recorded to their credit. Their own writers refer the unsympathetic customs of mediæval times to a dominant love of cleanliness, an instinctive shrinking from contact with material evidences of decay. Perhaps they are right; but it must be noted that in China also, the same aversion to the proximity of a corpse influences the people's conduct to this day. Among the Chinese, indeed, the legal responsibilities attaching to a household within whose

precincts a man dies, account sufficiently for the peculiarity, so far as the present time is concerned; but in remote ages the antipathy to death and disease may have had a different origin. On the whole, where a similar usage is found to exist among both nations, Chinese and Japanese, it may be safely assumed to have had its birth in China.

After the *Taikwa* era, more than one notification was issued to dispel the people's superstition about sickness and death, but not until later times did the effects of that enlightened teaching become practically apparent. Whenever a man had touched a corpse, or been present at any incident of a contaminating character, he scrupulously purified him-



GATHERING SHELL-FISH AT LOW TIDE.

self by scattering salt or making a libation of briny water. On the other hand, from the eighth century, the old method of trial by ordeal gave way to more rational methods. By the promulgation of the *Taikwa* code—the *Taiho-ryo*, as it was called—the nation found itself for the first time in possession of a body of criminal laws embodying duly defined punishments. Instead of dipping his hand in boiling water or pulling a snake out of a jar, a litigant brought his case before a local governor through a district office. Further, he enjoyed the privilege of appeal from the governor to the department of justice, and even from the department to the ministry. There were twenty grades of penalty and eight great crimes, at the head of which stood treason, *lese-majesty*, unfilial conduct and wifely infidelity. The governing classes, while holding themselves far aloof from the governed, constantly addressed to the latter admonitory proclamations, in which men were urged to be diligent in their callings, to practise economy, to value integrity, to exclude all mercenary considerations from their marriage contracts, to prefer simplicity to ostentation in their funeral rites, and not to desist from their bread-earning pursuits even during periods of mourning. Had the agriculturist, for whose behoof these fine precepts were chiefly formulated, been in a position to contrast the luxurious and effeminate conduct of his mentors with the high morality of their utterances, his wits might have been sharpened by the farce. But the life of the aristocrat lay, for the most part, far beyond the range of rustic vision; and if some evidence of its



splendor occasionally flashed across the humble provincial's dull horizon, duty, enforced by heavy penalties, required that he should kneel with his head in the dust while the pageant passed. Still he was taught to believe that the ear of the ruling class was always within reach of his complaint, and to quicken his faith there were set up in convenient places boxes with slotted lids, into which he was invited to thrust a written statement of any grievance that seemed to call for redress. Moreover, in urgent cases when speedy official notice had to be attracted, the ringing of a bell hung in a public building was supposed to effect the desired purpose. Prayer to the gods held the first rank as a sovereign specific against all trouble,—battle, murder or sudden death,—and as a remedy in seasons of sickness, doctors and drugs were reckoned alternative resources. Probably that order of aids was more or less dictated by the fact that, although physicians of repute, men skilled in all the arcana of the Chinese pharmacopœia, were easily procurable in the capital, few of them visited the provinces and fewer still devoted themselves to practice among the agricultural classes. When disease invaded the poor man's hamlet, he was practically powerless to contend against it, and, like unchecked conflagrations in a wooden city, epidemics cut their path through a country district until no more victims remained to be destroyed. Educational opportunities lay as far beyond the reach of the plebeian as medical assistance. Schools existed, one in every province, but the students taught there were chiefly sons of officials. It was assumed that learning belonged to the category of accomplishments for which a *Samurai* alone had any use, and though an edict of the Emperor Koken (749–752) required that a copy of the Confucian Analects must be among the belongings of every household, the injunction was never held applicable to farmers, artisans or tradesmen.

But if the line of division between the *Samurai* and the *Heimin*, the patrician and the plebeian, was always clearly marked, the former showed, from very early times, a keen and practical interest in the material well-being of the latter,—a natural result of the fact that from farmers (*no*), manufacturers (*ko*) and tradesmen (*sho*) the *Samurai* (*shi*) derived all his pecuniary resources. He himself paid no taxes: his business and his privilege were to spend their proceeds. But in order that the agriculturist might be able to meet the imposts levied on him, officialdom concerned itself to promote his prosperity by paternal and intelligent methods. As early as the close of the seventh century an Imperial edict authorized the remission of a portion of the farmer's legal tax, five per cent of the land's gross produce, the declared intention being to facilitate the accumulation of capital for purposes of agricultural enterprise. At that epoch the peasant's first object was to grow rice. Wherever irrigation was possible, he devoted himself to the laborious culture of the cereal that played in the economy of the Japanese an even more important rôle than wheat plays in the economy of the Anglo-Saxon race. The government appreciated the advisability of extending the range of production. It has already been noted that, under the provisions of laws enacted in the seventh century, six-yearly allotments of land were regularly made for agricultural uses. For the purposes of

### GROCERY AND FRUIT SHOP.

Green groceries are plentiful in Japan, and in addition to such staples as beans, peas, potatoes and cabbage, they use some products of the soil that seem almost inedible to a foreigner. Bamboo, chrysanthemum and lotus roots, sunflower and poppy seeds, lily bulbs, seaweed, a strong-smelling radish, burdock leaves and other unfamiliar vegetables are regarded with favor by the natives. Fruits are quite inferior both as to size and quality.











these allotments low lands were generally chosen, but from the beginning of the eighth century special grants of uplands were made, and the farmer was encouraged to grow barley, wheat, Indian corn, sesamum, turnips, mulberries, hemp and various fruits, as oranges, peaches and chestnuts. Active encouragement was also given to the reclamation of waste districts. In short, the authorities showed themselves obedient to a principle which, despite the evident aptitude of the Japanese race for industrial pursuits, continues to be counted the basis of Japanese economy, namely, that agriculture is the prime source of a country's wealth.

Had the system then mapped out and carefully pursued by the sovereigns Jito (690-697), Gensho (715-724) and Shomu (724-749) been consistently adhered to in succeeding generations, and had its operation been guaranteed against abuses, the development of a great and intelligent yeoman class must have been gradually brought about. But partly because the growing luxury and effeminacy of the nobles surrounding the Court in Kyoto revolted the military spirit of the *Samurai* and drove them to the provinces as the only field for robust ambition, and partly because in the ever-increasing corruption of the time the recipients of land grants were often men who thought more of converting such acquisitions into money than of bringing them under cultivation, the holdings of the farmers and the reclaimed districts were gradually absorbed into great estates, the embryo of military fiefs, and the genuine agriculturist continued to receive consideration with reference to his tax-paying capacities alone. Still, the central government's wise legislation during the eighth and ninth centuries must be recorded. Men that brought hitherto barren tracts into tillage and obtained a good yield received rewards in proportion to their success, and people that undertook the construction of works for purposes of irrigation or drainage were encouraged by monetary aid.

To provide against the danger of famine each farmer was required to store a certain quantity of millet every year, and local officials were taught that an important part of their duties consisted in fostering the productive capacity of the districts under their control, rewards being given to governors and head men in prosperous provinces, and punishments meted out where



MAIN STREET, YOKOHAMA.

Within the section of the city set apart for foreigners, known as the Settlement.



the returns were unsatisfactory. On the other hand, the rude character of agricultural methods may be inferred from the fact that not until the year 831 did the people conceive the idea of erecting wooden frames for drying sheaves of rice. A rice field at harvest time is in a state of moist muddiness that renders it quite unfit to be a bed for sheaves of grain, and the narrow banks that surround it do not offer adequate space. Previous to the inauguration of the simple device of wooden frames, a day's rain during harvest time involved heavy losses. China sent over cotton seed towards the close of the eighth century and tea-plants during the reign of the Emperor Saga (810-824), and buckwheat and beans were introduced in the next reign, so that by the middle of the ninth century the catalogue of agricultural products had become very extensive. Fishing and the pasturing of cattle also received official encouragement, and the interest taken by the upper classes in the development of the country's material progress is attested by the fact that an Imperial Prince, Yoshimune, is said to have invented the water-wheel (*circ.* 800 A. D.), a contrivance that added immensely to facilities of irrigation.

Commercial affairs, too, were not without intelligent patronage from the ruling class. Here, as in all other domains of Japanese civilization, Chinese aid appears. The system of weights and measures then in vogue, and used by all subsequent generations, was Chinese. It had been borrowed, if we may credit tradition, from that kingdom of *Wu* or *Go* to which detailed allusion has already been made, during the reign of the Emperor Sujin (97-29 B. C.), a date to be accepted, of course, with due reserve. In Shomei's time (629-642 A. D.), rules relating to weights and measures were issued, and by the ninth century all matters falling under that category, as well as affairs of barter and the regulation of markets, had been placed under official supervision. Midday was the time appointed for opening markets, and they closed at sunset, three strokes on the drum being the signal for all transactions to terminate. In the provinces there were fixed days in each month for holding markets, and towns often derived their names from the fact—as *Yokka-ichi* (fourth-daily market) and *Itsuka-ichi* (fifth-daily market). Prices were fixed by decree of the municipal authorities, and the section where men conducted business was separate from that where women met for the same purpose. Transactions were in the nature of barter only, until a comparatively late era. We find, indeed, a cursory historical assertion that, at the close of the fifth century, a *koku* (5.13 bushels) of rice could be purchased for one piece of silver. But no confident inference can be drawn that metallic media of exchange were in use at such an early date. It seems more probable that, desiring to record merely the fact of exceptional cheapness, the annalist employed terms current in his own day without considering their applicability to the era of which he wrote.

The first Japanese coins, copper cash, were cast at the commencement of the eighth century, and it is easy to see from authentic annals that popular ignorance and prejudice continued for a long time to obstruct the circulation of these tokens. Various devices were employed by the government to obtain credit for its rude little pioneers of metallic money.

Rank was conferred on persons that had amassed stores of them. Notifications were issued urging farmers to sell their produce for coin rather than to exchange it for goods, and exhorting travellers to provide themselves with a supply of the *Wado Kaichin*. It was announced that strings of cash would be accepted in commutation of forced labor and in lieu of taxes in kind, and, after a time, gold and silver tokens began to be struck as well as copper. But, on the whole, the system of barter remained in operation until the twelfth or thirteenth century, and the payment of taxes in kind was not given up until after the Restoration of 1867. In this latter point the farmer's instinct guided him correctly. His farm was capricious. Its yield varied largely owing to causes beyond his control. That the tax levied upon him should vary correspondingly, seemed just and natural, and in practice the principle received recognition from his tax-masters. A money payment, on the contrary, must tend to assume a character of fixity. He would be required to deliver up so many strings of cash or so many pieces of silver instead of so many bushels of grain or so many bundles of silk. Thus the vicissitudes of his agricultural life would gradually pass beyond the range of his ruler's sympathies. He wisely preferred the patriarchal custom of contributing to the State a yearly quota of his actual produce, and the State refrained from enforcing the more civilized, though less paternal, system.

Industries, useful and artistic, were now beginning to make marked progress. Ceramics and the manufacture of lacquer, both destined to bring fame to Japan eleven centuries later, were taken up under the direct patronage of the government during the *Nara* epoch. In the Imperial Household Department there existed an office charged with the superintendence of potters throughout the empire, and in the Department of Finance a bureau that discharged similar functions with regard to lacquer. Evidently with the object of encouraging individual effort, it was enacted that manufacturers of lacquer utensils, of swords, of spear blades and of saddles, should inscribe their names upon their productions. Unfortunately that wholesome habit does not appear to have attained permanency. It revolted the self-



LITTLE GIRLS DRESSED FOR AN OCCASION.



effacing instinct of the Japanese artisan, who, in all ages, has worked for the sake of his work rather than for the sake of the reputation it brought him. Throughout the whole of the Orient, not excepting China, the ceramic industry had not yet developed an artistic character when the Empress Gemmyo moved the Court to Nara (710 A. D.), nor yet when Kyoto became the Imperial residence (794 A. D.).

Under the Sung dynasty (960–1234 A. D.), especially in its closing years, the potters of the Middle Kingdom produced objects of much technical merit. Specimens of their achievements reached Japan, where they commanded great admiration, and where they were preserved from generation to generation with infinite care. But ability to imitate them did not exist, and we shall see, when referring to the subject in due place, that ceramic processes in Japan failed to emerge from a comparatively primitive state until the end of the sixteenth century.

In the art of lacquer-making, however, Japanese experts quickly developed ability that placed them at the head of all competitors. A collection of objects preserved at Nara illustrates that fact. It is a collection of the utensils, ornaments, robes and such things used by three emperors and three empresses during the Nara epoch, and it owes its existence to a custom in accordance with which a shrine or temple intrusted with the custody of a mortuary tablet became, at the same time, the recipient of a portion of the deceased's personal effects. There is no doubt about the genuineness of these articles. They actually belonged to the apparatus of the palace between the years 710 and 784 A. D. Specimens of lacquer that occur among them indicate considerable technical skill, though their decorative features present no earnest of the qualities for which Japan subsequently became famous. During the *Heian* epoch the lacquerer's art made still more marked progress. Fine examples of the *takamakiye* style, —that is to say, lacquer with golden surface and decoration in relief,— of lacquer inlaid with mother-of-pearl, a method copied from Chinese work, and of lacquer showing fields dusted, or finely tessellated, with particles of gold, survive from that era. The glyptic art, also, began to be practised with success from the tenth century. In common with all the decorative industries of the age, it owed much of its progress to the patronage of the Buddhist priests, and, doubtless because its products were destined chiefly for temple use, it seemed worthy to become the pursuit of men in high stations, two\* of whom acquired lasting fame and founded a family of sculptors renowned through many generations.

It is recorded that the manufacture of rich fabrics, brocade, sarcenet, *crêpe* and grass cloth was carried on largely in various parts of the empire during the *Nara* epoch, and though all industrial and artistic enterprises suffered some check from the middle of the tenth century, owing to the endless internecine struggles which, commencing then, lasted almost without intermission until the time of the *Taiko*, five hundred years later, progress was not arrested but only retarded.

\* Yasunao and his son, Sadatomo, who traced their descent to the Emperor Koko (885–893 A. D.).

We pass now to the Kamakura epoch. A prominent landmark in the story of Japan's mediæval development is the establishment of military feudalism, as indicated by the transfer of the administrative centre to Kamakura. The era which that event inaugurated is known in history as the Kamakura epoch. It covered a period of a century and a half, from the fall of the Taira clan and the rise of the Minamoto to the destruction of Kamakura. Like all the great chapters of Japanese annals, the Kamakura chapter opened with a revolution to restore the authority of the Imperial house, and closed with a revolution to free it from the tyranny of its original champions. To the student of Japan's story there presents itself at first sight a bewildering chaos of intrigues, of battles, of alarms, of excursions. He seems to be gazing at a stage where all the resources of theatrical management have been employed to create a scene suggesting only confusion, turmoil, the unceasing clash of weapons and the perpetual shock of unscrupulous ambitions. But when he looks more closely he begins to discern that as eddy follows eddy in the turbulent vortex, though each differs in composition and detail from its predecessor and from all the rest, each revolves about the same centre, the Throne.

The *Nara* and *Heian* epochs, that is to say, the interval between the beginning of the eighth century and the middle of the twelfth, may be called the Imperial period, for during that time the Court was not merely the nominal fountain of administrative authority,—that it had always been,—but also the actual source. We speak relatively. Japanese sovereigns ceased to be autocrats in very early ages. Whether they were ever autocrats in the Occidental sense of the term, seems exceedingly problematical. At no time do we find them exercising untrammelled authority, holding arbitrary power of life and death, legislating at the dictates of their own unchallenged judgment, or enriching themselves at the expense of their subjects. They stand out rather as abstractions, than as embodiments, of imperialism; rather as dispensers, than as wielders, of power. Many of them have shown noble qualities of humanity, of gracious kindness, of dignified resignation and of self-denying solicitude for the welfare of their subjects. Their benevolence is enshrined in the songs of children, but their lives have bequeathed few examples of prowess in the field or sagacity in the council chamber. It could scarcely have been otherwise. The genius of administration in Japan is oligarchical, not autocratic. From time immemorial the country has been ruled by a clan or a class. Whenever overshadowing authority was usurped by an individual and exercised exclusively, his overthrow became inevitable. Throughout the *Nara* and *Heian* epochs, the Court governed, but the machinery of government was furnished by the four great clans, the Fujiwara, the Tachibana, the Taira and the Minamoto. It is true that for a brief period the Imperial authority stood higher than the influence of those proud aristocrats. From the accession of the Emperor Gosanjo (1009) to the death of the ex-Emperor Shirakawa (1130), the administration was directed and controlled by the Court, the Fujiwara nobles, hitherto paramount, being resolutely thrust aside. But even then a vicarious element marred the reality of the Emperor's sway. The actual occupant of the throne was, in effect, a shadow



sovereign, the substance of power being in the hands of the ex-Emperor Shirakawa. After that momentary assertion of imperialism, the aristocratic oligarchy stepped again into the forefront of the pageant. The Taira clan became paramount, and its celebrated leader, Kiyomori, held the empire for nearly twenty years in the hollow of his hand. For him, also,



A PAPER STORE.

events revolved in an orbit that might have been unerringly constructed from elements offered by every previous chapter of his country's history. His encroachments not merely on the authority, but even on the dignity, of the Throne provoked a reaction, and he was crushed by the Minamoto under Yoritomo's leadership. Then, for the first time, the impe-

rial capital ceased to be the seat of administrative authority. The Kamakura epoch commenced. The *Shoguns* ruled really in Kamakura, the Emperors nominally in Kyoto. Note, now, how that order of things also changed. Yoritomo's judgment failed him signally at one period of his career. He married the daughter of a Taira noble, married into the clan of his enemies. Very quickly after his death that error worked the ruin of his house. His widow's relatives compassed the death of his two sons and obtained control of the Kamakura government. These new administrators are known as the "Hojo." They were, in fact, a branch of the Taira. The Court in Kyoto, still smarting under the recollection of Kiyomori's arbitrary haughtiness, and not yet reconciled to the open establishment of the dual system of government, made an effort to overthrow the Kamakura *Shoguns*, and failed signally. The Hojo chieftains entered Kyoto at the head of a victorious army, and signalized their triumph by compelling the Emperor to abdicate in favor of his cousin, and by banishing, to long distances from the capital, three ex-Emperors to whose initiative they attributed the disturbance. Yoritomo had been careful to preserve a semblance of administrative association with the Imperial Court. The Hojo gave themselves no such concern. They left to the Fujiwara a few empty titles, and, establishing themselves at two positions in Kyoto, conducted the affairs of the central government independently of the Court, while from Kamakura they controlled the local administrations. But the Hojo also were drawn into the orbit that involved fatal

## A GEISHA.

A geisha receives from early childhood an elaborate training under severe discipline to fit her for the manifold duties which await her. She is taught etiquette, grace, polite speech, playing on musical instruments, singing and dancing. She must learn games, the service of banquets and weddings and the art of dressing and making herself attractive. Her services are in demand at public and private entertainments and occasions of social festivities. She is purchased from her parents in early childhood under a contract by which for many years all she earns belongs to her employer.











collision with the Throne. Their political principle was *Divide et impera*. They rendered the Fujiwara clan impotent for purposes of resistance by separating it into five branches, each of which was to hold the office of Regent (*Kwampaku*) in succession.

It has already been explained that the *Kwampaku*, once the chief repository of administrative power, had been stripped of all real authority from the time when the military nobles attained the ascendancy. Nevertheless, he remained always the first subject in the realm, and neither the Taira nor the Minamoto ever attempted to wrest from the Fujiwara the honor of inheriting that illustrious title. Its possession became, however, a source of weakness rather than of strength to the Fujiwara when their five branches were placed on an equal footing of heirship. The Hojo were able to apply their system even to the occupants of the throne. It is unnecessary to trace in detail the incidents that created so unique an opportunity for the Hojo. Dealing with broad outlines only, we may confine ourselves to saying that the *Shogun* Sadatoki, at the beginning of the fourteenth century, found himself in a position to apportion the right of succession between two lines of the Imperial family, and to decide that their representatives should reign alternately, each for ten years. Such interference in affairs traditionally removed far beyond the reach of any subject's meddling could not fail to produce fatal results. Thirty years sufficed to precipitate a crisis. The Hojo *Shogun* had to choose between the breakdown of the sacrilegious system and an even

more sacrilegious alternative, the dethronement and exile of a reigning sovereign. He chose the latter course, and did not shrink from force in carrying it out. That was the signal for the overthrow of the Hojo. Once more the Minamoto rose in arms and the Hojo were destroyed. These events happened in 1333 A. D. With it the Kamakura era closed. Thereafter



BASKET VENDER.

Bamboo frames attached to the ends of a stout bamboo pole which is carried upon the shoulder, give the street pedler ample space for displaying his wares.

ensued a period of 59 years, one of the most miserable in Japanese history. It is known as the era of the Northern and Southern Dynasties, the representatives of two lines of the Imperial family claiming and holding the sceptre simultaneously, the whole country being divided into two camps, and a state of warfare perpetually existing. At last, in 1392,



the struggle ceased temporarily, and the Ashikaga *Shoguns* became the repositories of power. The period of their sway is called the Muromachi epoch, from the fact that their seat of authority was at Muromachi in Kyoto. Very soon the question of the Imperial succession again threw the nation into a tumult, and the demoralizing effects of these almost continuous eras of battle and violence began to be shown in the careers of military leaders, each of whom fought for his own hand, giving himself no concern about any government, whether that of *Shogun* or that of sovereign, and allying himself with whatever party seemed most likely to promote his selfish ambition. If the annals of that era be read closely, they present a spectacle of the worst passions in the repertoire of human nature. Bravery there was indeed—splendid bravery—supplemented by sagacity, strategic ability, promptitude in action, and sometimes magnificent devotion. But more prominent were treachery, intrigue, merciless cruelty, the loosening of all bonds of natural affection, and the exercise of unscrupulous cunning. “In short,” as recent Japanese historians have written, “wealth and strength had become the only guiding principles in that era of perpetual combat. The histories of the Taira, of the Minamoto, of the Hojo and of the Ashikaga had insensibly established the creed that a prize scarcely inferior to the sceptre itself lay within reach of any noble whose territorial influence and military resources enabled him to grasp it.” While the provinces thus echoed the tramp of armies; while the merchants and peasants were constantly required to supply money for the conduct of campaigns, and while robbery and pillage still further impoverished the country, the Ashikaga *Shoguns* were living lives of historical luxury and splendor in Kyoto.

At the end of the fourteenth century Ashikaga Yoshimitsu, who had retired from official life and ceded his functions to his son, built for himself a residence which remains to this day a monument of refined elegance and lavish expenditure. The materials, contributed by provincial governors and territorial magnates, were the choicest that Japan could furnish. The best artists of the day were engaged upon its decoration. The columns, doors and ceilings were strewn so profusely with dust of gold that when the edifice was thrown open to the light of day, after the airy fashion of Japanese buildings, it glowed from base to summit. Men called it *Kinkaku-ji*, or the golden pavilion. As for the state in which its princely inmate lived, his banquets, his musicians, his dancers, his pictures, his porcelains, his silks, his lacquers, his jade, his jewels, his crystals, his lights-of-love and his courtiers,—they were on a scale that tradition describes in terms probably accurate enough but too elaborate for the purposes of any sober narrative. The eighth of the Ashikaga *Shoguns*, Yoshimasa, whose record is unredeemed by the high military and administrative abilities that Yoshimitsu displayed, exceeded the latter in everything that makes for self-indulgence, extravagance and luxury. He built a “Silver Pavilion” to rival the “Golden Pavilion” of Yoshimitsu; he established for himself the reputation of a dilettante in whose eyes the acquisition of an object of *virtu* justified any sacrifice; and he carried the gratification of the senses to such

a pitch that, in order to suggest the coolness of a snow scene in summer moonlight, he caused a range of hills to be carpeted with white silk. Yoshimasa lived to see other sights besides his "Silver Pavilion" and his summer snow. He lived to see Kyoto converted into an eleven-years' battlefield. Combats occurred every day and were accompanied by numerous conflagrations. The Imperial palace, the mansions of the nobles, the residences and warehouses of the citizens and many of the largest temples were burned to the ground. Books and documents and many invaluable heirlooms, transmitted from ancient times, were destroyed. The once splendid city was reduced to a state of desolation and ruin. The military and civilian classes alike were plunged in poverty. The laws were not operative. The administration of justice was in disorder. The Muromachi *Shoguns* had lived on the principle *après nous le déluge*, and the deluge duly came, reducing Kyoto to a heap of ruins and burying the debauched dynasty under the *débris*.

With these facts before us we are in a position to refer to a distinction advanced by Japanese historians, the distinction of *Kuge* customs and *Buke* customs. The *Kuge* customs are those that prevailed in the Imperial capital during the *Nara* and *Heian* epochs; the *Buke* customs are those inaugurated and practised by the military nobles and their followers during the Kamakura epoch, to be succeeded by the *Kuge* customs once more at the close of the Muromachi era. Briefly stated, it is a distinction between effeminacy, dilettanteism, devotion to literature, poetry and calligraphy, perfunctoriness in the discharge of official duties, contempt for the soldier's calling and excessive zeal in the cause of religion, on the one hand, and on the other, simplicity of life and habits, rigid discipline, the practice of martial exercises, and the avoidance of everything tending to enervate the body or undermine the principles of loyalty, fidelity and gratitude as displayed in the relations between lord and vassal. Undoubtedly the distinction found practical illustration in the life of the *Samurai*, especially *Samurai* of the middle and lower ranks, whose comparatively insignificant position kept them beyond the range of intrigue or inordinate ambition. The *Samurai*, or the *Bushi*,



DANCING GIRL.

Dressed in man's costume on the occasion of a special festival.



as he preferred to call himself, was an ideal soldier. The one object that occupied the vista of all his acts and aims was the advancement of his feudal chief's interests. He knew neither parents, brothers, sisters, wife nor children until the dictates of fealty were satisfied. His life, not less than the service of his sword, was held payable to his lord on demand. He had his code of honor, of which the first tenet was that a *Bushi* never lied; and he had his code of etiquette, which instructed him how to comport himself whether in the presence of his superiors or in the face of death. He obeyed the dictates of politeness even before crossing weapons with a foe. He never shrank from combat, and he was always ready to expiate a fault by suicide. He had his faults, of course. Conspicuous among them was cruel contempt for any one that did not follow the calling of arms. He had no objection that his wife and children should carry on domestic industries to eke out the generally scanty pay that he received from his lord, and he would even join in the task of bread-winning himself. But he treated the farmer, the mechanic and the trader — above all the trader — with the bluntest haughtiness, and held their lives barbarously cheap. Yet, on the whole, it is doubtful whether any country has produced a man better fitted for warlike purposes, or less prone, in moments of victory, to the grosser excesses that have disgraced the soldiers of other countries in all ages. The *Bushi* of Japan often used his sword mercilessly, but it is nowhere on record that he ever yielded to the impulses of lust in the hour of brute force's triumph.

Something of the same indifference to the affairs of the commoner manifested itself in the administration of the great military nobles. They left the farmer in undisturbed possession of his holding, encouraged the mechanic's pursuit of his craft, and refrained from interference in the business of the merchant. But they did not hesitate to make forced levies in coin and kind on all three classes when necessity arose, and it scarcely occurred to them that any account need be taken of the *Heimin* (commoner) in their legislation. In a code of fifty-one laws, framed by direction of the Hojo Yasutoki (1250 A. D.), provisions relating to the agricultural, manufacturing and mercantile orders are virtually absent. The legislator seems to have considered that his duty did not extend beyond furnishing a body of rules for the settlement of all questions that might arise among the Kamakura feudatories and vassals. The limits of authority legitimately devolving upon provincial governors and territorial nobles, certain points relating to the promotion and retirement of magnates, general ordinances with reference to land, to succession, to property, to civil suits, to marriage, to rebellion, to murder and to lesser crimes — these were the only things taken account of by Yasutoki's lawgivers. They did not even publish the code, such as it was. Nothing brings into stronger prominence the absence of any theory of popular rights than this habit of private legislation. It really did not matter, in the *Bushi's* opinion, whether the *Heimin* knew or did not know what kind of treatment he might expect at the hands of the law in a given contingency. The fellow must be satisfied, anyhow. He could learn the ethics of daily life by listening to the sermons of Buddhist priests, and he ought to know by tradition that his

first duty was to be docile and submissive. Laws were for the assistance of rulers, and had the further use of securing uniformity of procedure, which was desirable as a means of inspiring respect. The commoner had nothing to do with law except to suffer the penalties that it imposed on him. Nevertheless, the same Yasutoki transmitted to posterity the reputation of a ruler who displayed toward the people most urbane consideration, and neglected no means of winning their affection; whose career was never disfigured by any passionate excesses, and whose use of power never degenerated into abuse.

The establishment of military feudalism and the prevalence of the *Buke* customs during the Kama-



TOMB OF THE SOGA BROTHERS, JŪRŌ AND GORŌ.

In the year 1193 these brothers avenged the murder of their father by Kudō Suketsune. Jūrō perished in the attempt, and Gorō was condemned to have his head hacked off with a blunt sword.

kura epoch exercised an influence that may be traced in all departments of the nation's life. Literature, of course, suffered conspicuously. The art of war attracted a large part of the attention hitherto bestowed upon the study of the Confucian philosophy, and it became more important to wield a sword deftly and shoot an arrow straight than to trace an ideograph or illuminate a missal. It is recorded that, in the days of the Hojo supremacy, men of note no longer reckoned among their most honorable accomplishments, facility in turning a couplet or composing a classical phrase. The fencing school, the manage and the archery range engrossed a large part of the *Bushi's* attention, and when leisure could be snatched from military training the favorite pursuits were hunting, hawking, wrestling and the equestrian performances called *innui* and *yabusame*, of which we shall speak more fully by and by. The university in Kyoto and the schools which had been established by the *Kuge* in the provinces gradually deteriorated for lack of patronage, and officialdom gave itself no concern about this decay of the educational machinery. Education, it must be remembered, was among the privileges of the *Samurai* class; commoners had no need of it. Thus the disappearance of educational facilities became a matter of no consequence when the *Samurai's* business in life was to be a soldier, not a student. A library established at Kanazawa by Hojo Akitoki in 1316 is said to have been the only official contribution to literary resources during the Kamakura epoch. It may be broadly stated that the vicissitudes of Kyoto were



reflected in the vicissitudes of literature. So soon as Kyoto ceased to be the centre of political power, literature declined; so soon as Kyoto recovered its metropolitan character, literature revived. From the castles of the Minamoto and the Hojo at Kamakura and Odawara no patronage was extended to education or scholarship, but at the palace of the Ashikaga in Muromachi men of learning, poets and historians generally found encouragement. The Buddhist priests, however, never flagged in their pursuit of learning. They made frequent voyages to China for purposes of study, and from time to time invited Chinese *literati* to visit and reside in Japan. Thus gradually the priests came to be regarded as the sole repositories of classical knowledge, and there was brought about a state of affairs precisely analogous to that which existed in Europe during mediæval, and even comparatively modern, eras, when the functions of advice in civil affairs, the drafting of documents and the interpretation of books fell almost entirely to churchmen, and when the only means of obtaining an education was to enlist the services of a priest. Of the effect that the development of the *Buke* customs produced upon the literary compositions of the time we shall speak in due place.

In striking contrast to the decline of literature was the development of art during the Kamakura and Muromachi epochs. The crafts of the sword-smith and the armorer certainly deserve to be included in this category, for the weapons of offence and defence that Japanese



A LANE IN HOMMOKU.

Hommoku is a seaside village; a suburb of Yokohama.

artisans began to produce from the twelfth century are justly ranked among objects of *virtu* by Western connoisseurs of our own days. From the time of the Emperor Gotoba (1186-1197), who, after abdicating in favor of his son, as was the fashion of that era, made the forging and tempering of sword blades his unique pastime, the craftsmen of Japan

learned to manipulate iron and steel with unparalleled dexterity. It is enough to say here that the annals of the Kamakura epoch are inscribed with the names of Masamune and Myochin, and that the Goto family then began to chisel those marvellous pictures in iron, steel, copper, silver, gold, *shakudo* and *shibuichi* which, as examples of glyptic skill applied to

### O-SUWA PARK AT NAGASAKI.

With the Japanese, landscape gardening is one of the fine arts. Ever since the middle of the fifteenth century it has been elaborated and refined until it has come to be considered a mystery, as well as an art, possessing a vocabulary more complicated and recondite than would be thought possible. Gardens are supposed to symbolize abstract ideas, such as peace, chastity, old age, etc. They are invariably picturesque and attractive, but theatrical in effect, the hand of the gardener being everywhere apparent.











metals, are absolutely without peers in the productions of any country. A curious trait of the character of the Japanese in mediæval times is that, while battle and bloodshed constituted the business of their daily lives, all the paraphernalia for the indulgence of those primitive passions breathed a spirit of the most artistic refinement. As for the arts of the painter, the lacquerer, the potter, the architect and the sculptor, the chapter of their history that now opens must be treated independently; but the nature of their development may be generally inferred from the facts that in this era the Golden Pavilion of Yoshimitsu and the Silver Pavilion of Yoshimasa were constructed, and that Kamakura saw the casting of that wonderful image of Buddha, the celebrated *Daibutsu*, concerning which it has been well said that "no other Japanese work of art gives such an impression of majesty, or so truly symbolizes the central idea of Buddhism—the intellectual calm which comes of perfected knowledge and the subjugation of all passion."

Kamakura, which in the days of the Minamoto and the Hojo is said to have contained a million inhabitants, became, from the thirteenth century, the centre of trade as of politics. A considerable measure of order had by that time been introduced into the realm of commerce. Seven kinds of markets existed, and merchants were able to transport their wares on horseback throughout the provinces, though not without peril of bandits, who had their haunts in the mountains, from whence they issued with singular boldness to the attack of wayfarers and the rifling of houses. The exploits of some of these robbers, their daring, their skill in the use of weapons, and the desperate devices to which they resorted, form the nucleus of many a thrilling legend. As a rule they avoided crossing the path of the *Bushi*, but occasionally they did not shrink from a manœuvre the conception of which had apparently been imported from Korea; they assumed the disguise of officials and collected "aids" from the peasantry and the merchants, who in those days neither argued nor asked questions in the presence of *Samurai*.

The law of supply and demand received no recognition at the hands of the feudal administrators. If the staples of daily consumption showed any tendency to rise to inconvenient prices, they were quickly pulled down by official edict to a comfortable level. Interference of that nature, however paternal the motives that originally dictated it, soon came to be exercised in the interests of the individual official almost as much as in those of consumers at large. The peasant or the merchant, learning that his prosperity depended in great measure on the degree of benevolence he could evoke among "the honorable upper folk," approached the task with whatever weapons of persuasion his purse could supply, and considered such manœuvres perfectly legitimate since they received the practical sanction of the aristocracy.

Amid much that was civilized, refined and astute, a notably unprogressive feature of the time was the absence of convenient media of exchange. Gold and silver were obtained in abundance from mines in Japan, as well as from China and Korea, but they were not used for purposes of coinage. The only monetary tokens in the hands of the people were copper



and iron cash, struck in China under the *Sung* dynasty, and similar coins of Japanese minting. These were strung upon straw plaits, a hundred constituting a string, and a hundred strings went to the *riyo*, a monetary unit which then existed on paper only, but subsequently came to be represented by portly ellipsoids of the precious metals. Some idea may be



TONOSAWA IN THE HAKONE MOUNTAINS.

A small village on the road from Yokohama to Miyanoshita.

formed of the exceedingly economical habits of the lower orders in mediæval Japan when we note that their unit of value, the cash or *mon*, was the thousandth part of the modern *yen*; that is to say, the two thousandth part of an American gold dollar. Three or four of these little fragments of iron or copper constituted a reasonable donation to the money chest of a

temple or shrine, or an alms for which a beggar bowed his head in the dust. Another medium of exchange was grass cloth (*jofu*), a hempen fabric highly prized by the upper classes. It was with rolls of this delicate material that the peasant or merchant usually armed himself when he desired to court official favor. As a further illustration of the importance attaching to money, we may note that a difference existed in the purchasing powers of Chinese and Japanese cash. One would imagine that account could scarcely have been taken of the relative value of tokens intrinsically so valueless. But the thrifty Japanese scrutinized things more closely, and in 1193 A. D. an edict was issued interdicting the use of Chinese cash so as to obviate confusion in fixing the market prices of staples. That attempt to introduce a purely national currency did not succeed, however, for seventy-three years later we find the Hojo Regent, Tokimune, sending Japanese gold to China for the purpose of purchasing Chinese cash. One inevitable result of such clumsy media was that the difficulty of transporting them soon suggested bills of exchange for transactions between distant places. It is true that transactions of that kind constituted a very small element in the commerce of the time, but they grew with the growth of the fiefs and the consequent development of local prosperity. Credit, however, had not yet received much recognition as a factor in the promotion of commerce and industry. Transactions of borrowing and lending took place on a large scale, indeed, but they were connected with personal, rather than with business

convenience, and their nature is inferable from a law which limited the period of a loan to one year and the rate of interest to fifty per cent. In the middle of the thirteenth century, this law was supplemented by an edict that the principal of a debt must not increase with lapse of time, and that the interest must not be raised above the figure entered in the original note. It is recorded that loans were generally made in that era at a monthly interest of from five to eight per cent, and that some kind of security was required in most cases, garments, articles of furniture, objects of art, or swords being the common form of pledge. Land, also, might be mortgaged, but not for a longer period than twenty years. That debts contracted within such limits should become insupportably onerous was inevitable, and in the time of Yoshimasa, that is to say, at the close of the fifteenth century, riots occurred more than once in Kyoto, the sole purpose of the rioters being to destroy the certificates of debt preserved in the strong rooms of usurers and men of wealth.

Concerning trade beyond the territorial waters of Japan up to the tenth century there is not much to be said. It was limited to transactions of a fitful character with China and Korea. In connection with this subject it has to be noted that the art of navigation remained in a comparatively backward state among the Japanese long after their general progress in other directions had become very marked. The use of sails does not appear to have been known, or, at any rate, was not appreciated, until the sixteenth century. Oars were the only means of propulsion, as many as a hundred being sometimes employed, though the usual number for sea-going, that is to say, coasting, vessels was from forty to fifty-eight. A voyage to China in a rowboat was an enterprise too perilous to be lightly undertaken. Moreover, Japanese subjects did not enjoy liberty in the field of foreign commerce. They were forbidden to carry merchandise to China without special permission, and if they disregarded the veto they usually encountered difficulties at the port of entry, for in China also official restrictions existed, and unless provided with a passport, the foreign trader found himself in a dilemma. It does not appear that the embargo thus put upon commerce had its motive in any desire for national seclusion. The true reason was that officials preferred to monopolize the business themselves. Several instances are recorded of punishments inflicted on Japanese subjects in the tenth and eleventh centuries for crossing to China with cargoes of merchandise; but in spite of such obstacles the trade grew gradually, so that in the thirteenth century a considerable outward and inward movement of goods took place at Takata in the province of Chikuzen, and at Bonotsu in the province of Satsuma,—the former being the port for Korea, and the latter that for China. According to Japanese annals, the staples of import from China were raw silk, indigo, Indian ink, porcelain and matting; and those from Japan were rice, other cereals and timber. But in Chinese annals articles of so-called "tribute" received from Japan at the close of the eleventh century are registered as a silver censer, *mukoroshi* berries, white glass, five scents, crystals, red sandal wood, amber rosaries, colored satin and quicksilver.



The great Taira chieftain Kiyomori (1170 A. D.) appreciated the benefits of foreign commerce, and would fain have encouraged transactions with China. To that end he sought to promote intercourse with the neighboring empire, though he refrained from any attempt to renew the system of official embassies interrupted three hundred years previously. He also planned and carried out extensive improvements of the harbor at Hyogo (Kobe), now the second of the open ports of Japan in point of importance. Doubtless his object was to substitute Hyogo for Hakata and Bonotsu as a port of entry for Chinese goods, in order to divert to the central treasury the taxes and duties levied locally upon the trade, and in order, also, to secure its direct control, a highly profitable monopoly. But Kiyomori soon had to turn his attention solely to his own defence, and his policy of commercial expansion was not pursued by his successors. It is recorded that several overtures for the re-establishment of official relations between the neighboring empires were made by sovereigns of the *Sung* dynasty, but they met with no encouragement in Japan. In the year 1254 A. D., we find the Hojo Regent, Tokiyori, limiting to five the number of vessels engaged in commerce with China, issuing special licenses to those five, and ordering that any unlicensed boat which encroached upon the commerce should be burned. Tokiyori's restrictions did not prove efficient. Neither the Governor of Kiushiu, within whose immediate jurisdiction the port of Hakata lay, nor the Konoye nobles who ruled in Satsuma, were disposed to forego the profits of the trade in deference to an order from distant Kyoto. They obeyed nominally, but the number of vessels plying to and fro underwent no diminution.



THE CUSTOM HOUSE AT YOKOHAMA.

## VII.

### YOSHITSUNE, GENGHIS AND THE MONGOL INVASION.



JAPANESE pirates began to renew their raids upon the Korean coast about thirty years before the issue of Tokiyori's veto limiting the number of ships engaged in trade with China. The island of Tsushima was the home of these freebooters at the time (1227-8 A. D.) when they re-directed their attention to the neighboring peninsula, inaugurating a series of lawless acts destined to attain large dimensions in later eras, and to make the name of Japan a terror to all adjacent nations. The year noted for that event in Japanese history was marked by a far more memorable incident in the history of China—the death of Genghis Khan. Among many erudite Japanese there prevails with regard to that wonderful soldier a belief as romantic as it is interesting. They identify him with Yoshitsune, the young general by whose brilliant strategical talent the Taira power was broken and the Minamoto family placed at the head of the administration. To discuss such a question at anything like the length that its interest suggests would carry us beyond the scope of this work; but it cannot be left entirely unnoticed, seeing that with the name of Kublai, the grandson of Genghis, is associated the first invasion of Japan in historical times,—an invasion that for a moment threatened her national integrity, and from a terrible menace was converted, by the valor of her people, into a proud memory.

Yoshitsune was a baby in arms when the so-called "Hogen Insurrection" occurred and when his father, Yoshitomo, took part in that battle already spoken of; the battle against which a black mark is set in Japanese history as the most unnatural combat of all eras, two elder brothers fighting against two younger, a father against his son, and an uncle against his nephew. A one-day combat, occurring in the sequel of a series of minor struggles and intrigues, it resulted in the temporary annihilation of the influence hitherto wielded by the Minamoto clan, and in the transfer of administrative power to the Taira under the leadership of Kiyomori. The merciless custom of the era would have consigned to death all the leaders of the defeated clan and their scions. Yoshitomo, indeed, though he survived the battle, was afterwards foully slaughtered by a friend whose loyalty could not bear the test of misfortune, and of his five legitimate sons the fates may be briefly recorded as an illustrative page of the era's history. Yoshihira, the eldest, made prisoner in battle, was executed in Kyoto by order of Kiyomori. Tomonaga, the second, severely wounded by an arrow, and knowing that if he went out to fight he must fall into the enemy's hand, asked his father to kill him, and the



request was complied with. Mareyoshi, the fourth, lived until the time when Yoritomo raised his standard in Izu, and then, knowing that Yoritomo had decided upon his death, committed suicide. Noriyori, the fifth, quarrelled with Yoritomo after the latter's success, and being attacked by Yoritomo's general, Kajiware, killed himself. Thus the death of two of his brothers lay at Yoritomo's door. As for Yoritomo himself, he was saved by a singular chance. A lad of thirteen, he was placed in confinement pending the decision of the victors, and there is little doubt that all troublesome contingencies would have been effectually averted by his execution had not the stepmother of the Taira chief Kiyomori pleaded for his young life, being moved to pity by the likeness that he bore to a deceased child of her own. Banishment to the distant province of Izu was therefore substituted for death; an act of leniency bitterly requited twenty-one years later (1180 A. D.) when Yoritomo raised the white standard in the northeast, and commenced a campaign that ended in the complete overthrow of the Taira.

Yoshitsune was an illegitimate child of Yoshitomo. His mother, Tokiwa, a woman celebrated in Japanese history for her beauty, her courage and her misfortunes, receiving news of her husband's defeat and being warned of its thoroughness, fled through the snow in the early days of the year 1159, carrying Yoshitsune in her bosom and leading her two other boys by the hand. The circumstances of that terrible journey, the fate that pursued the three little lads, the love that lent such strength to the delicately nurtured, fair-faced mother, —all these things appealed so powerfully to the dramatic instinct of the Japanese that the poet, the painter, the sculptor in every succeeding age found a moving motive in the incident. We are not here concerned with the details of Tokiwa's tragedy — how she made good her escape but was subsequently induced to surrender herself and her sons by way of ransom for the life of her mother, then held a prisoner in the Tokiwa palace at Rokuhara; how another surrender, that of her own beautiful person to the embraces of Kiyomori, ransomed the lives of her children, and how, as time effaced her charms, she faded from the annals of her era until that flight through the snow and the darkness remained her sole title to be remembered by posterity. The two elder of her three sons took the tonsure and died in the cloister, "unhonored and unsung." The youngest, Yoshitsune, destined also to chant litanies and intone *sutras*, was immured in the monastery of Kurama. But he never emerged from the acolyte stage. His earliest thoughts turned to things other than the altar and the stole; and before the repeated efforts of the Kurama monks had succeeded in bringing him under the yoke of the rosary, he made his escape to Oshiu by the assistance of a dealer in iron, whose services were rendered loyal by the memory of favors received at the hands of the Minamoto in past years. Before Yoshitsune left the monastery at Kurama, he had become a skilled swordsman. Strange legends are connected with that accomplishment. He is said to have received lessons from the mountain genii, the *Tengu*, or bird-faced beings of Japanese tradition, and we shall presently see that in that quaint fancy may possibly be

## ACROBATS.

The itinerant juvenile acrobats pick up a living in the streets, parks and temple grounds by displaying an agility and a boneless flexibility that are truly astonishing. Some of them seem mere babies until they begin their performances, when their strength and skill seem beyond their years. They are merry little fellows and accept either money or rebuffs with the same smiling good nature.











traced one of the links connecting his identity with Genghis Khan. The northern part of the main island of Japan, owing to its distance and its comparative inaccessibility from Kyoto, enjoyed in those days a large measure of local autonomy, and Yoshitsune found not only refuge but also powerful patronage at the stronghold of Hidehira, one of the most puissant of the military chieftains then beginning to establish the semi-independent principalities of the feudal system. The Taira chief knew of this flight from the cloister at Kurama, but his arm was not long enough to reach to Oshiu.

Five years later (1180) there came to the hands of Yoritomo, the Izu exile, a mandate from the Imperial Court in Kyoto authorizing him to take the field against the Taira, whose arrogance and arbitrariness had become intolerable. Yoshitsune, then only twenty-one, hastened from Oshiu to join his brother's standard, and, despite his youth, was placed in command of a large force, which subsequently marched westward, and in a series of campaigns the scene of which extended from the centre to the southern coast of the main island of Japan, won victory after victory, until the last remnants of the Taira strength were shattered at Dan-no-ura. Yoshitsune's achievements in this war deserved all the fame that they earned. The rapidity with which he delivered his strokes, the strategical insight and the wise daring of his plans showed him to be what his nation calls him, a general without any peer in the annals of Japan. Hideyoshi, who alone disputes the palm with Yoshitsune, won great battles and displayed splendid resources of talent in the field. But with Hideyoshi craft was a factor as potent as force. He enlisted all the potentialities of intrigue in his cause, and never intrusted to the sword any issue that could be controlled from the cabinet. It may be claimed that Hideyoshi's methods showed the highest instinct of genius, perfect concord with the circumstances of his time. But that contention belongs to another class of considerations. The point is that in all the qualities of pure soldiership Yoshitsune stands, if not absolutely pre-eminent, certainly unsurpassed. The artists of his country, to whom his adventures have furnished many a subject for delineation in painting or sculpture, endow him with a lithe,



THEATRE STREET, OSAKA.

So called because of the theatres here located.



firmly knit but eminently graceful frame, and features of almost feminine beauty. In reality he was a short, strongly built and singularly active man, and whatever claim to comeliness he possessed was marred by prominent front teeth. Among his stanchest vassals the names of two have not only become household words in Japan, but find also a place in the strange chapter of Mongol-Japanese history which we are now specially considering. They are Saito Benkei and Washi-no-o Saburo. Of the latter we need not say more than that he shared all Yoshitsune's confidences and followed him in all his fortunes. Of the former every one interested in Japanese history should know that, though reared in a monastery and intended for a priestly career, he became a species of roving fighter, and being blessed with vast strength, an advantage which he supplemented by remarkable skill in the use of a weapon then very formidable, the glaive, he was able to pursue for a time a career of lawless violence in Kyoto. There, by some train of events not clearly defined in history, Benkei came into collision with Yoshitsune, who was then visiting the city in disguise, and there ensued a combat destined to be immortalized on the stage of Japan, on the silk of her painters and in the work of her sculptors.<sup>1</sup> It was fought on a bridge, and so extraordinary were the feats of agility opposed by Yoshitsune to the onsets of the giant glaivesman, that in traditional representations of the scene the future conqueror of the Taira is shown traversing the narrow balustrade of the bridge on wooden pattens. Worst of his youthful opponent, Benkei swore fealty to Yoshitsune, and held the oath sacred until death.

Yoshitsune's meteoric career could not fail to create many enmities. Translated to his brother Yoritomo by a rival who held high place in the latter's confidence, the conqueror of the Taira became an object of suspicion. Yoritomo secretly despatched from Kamakura an emissary to compass his death, but the would-be assassin fell under the sword of his intended victim. That event had been preceded by various efforts on Yoshitsune's part to dispel his brother's suspicions. There is no reason to suppose that treasonable designs were really entertained by the young general. But when he found that the dagger of a murderer was the kind of message he had to expect from Kamakura, he openly assumed the offensive and obtained an Imperial edict authorizing him to take up arms against Yoritomo. The Kamakura ruler had laid his plans so astutely, however, that before the edict could be obeyed it was revoked and replaced by a mandate to all the provincial authorities directing them to arrest Yoshitsune wherever discovered. Yoshitsune fled to Oshiu, and found refuge with his old patron, Hidehira. Four years later Hidehira died, and his son, Yasuhira, receiving from Kamakura an order bearing the seals of the sovereign and the *Shogun*, took measures for the destruction of Yoshitsune, and, placing his head in a tub of *saké* (rice spirit), sent it to Kamakura, where it was inspected and nominally identified forty-three days later.

Such are the outlines of the story as traced in the pages of generally accredited history. The *gundan*, or war tales, with which Japanese *raconteurs* entertain audiences, according

<sup>1</sup> "Hashi-Benkei," or "Benkei and the bridge," is the name by which the combat is known in the field of art.

to a fashion inaugurated centuries ago, embody vivid records of Yoshitsune's tragic end. Imagination is doubtless responsible for some, perhaps many, of the details thus poured into the ears of eager listeners; but whatever deductions have to be made on that score, it will not be uninteresting to reproduce here an account compiled from the *gundan* as showing the kind of picture that tradition draws of the warriors of the twelfth century and their manner of fighting and dying. The scene is laid in Oshiu, and the time is that immediately subsequent to the death of the old chieftain Hidehira:

"Of Hidehira's sons the eldest, Yori-hira, far excelled his brothers in physical and mental endowments. Few of the northern *Bushi* could hold their own against him with bow or sword, and partly from that cause, partly for the sake of his frank and loyal nature, Yoshitsune had conceived for him a friendship which the old chief's death strengthened rather than diminished. Yori-hira had been born before his father was sixteen years of age, and thus, though well fitted to succeed to the control of the fief, it had been considered expedient to set him aside in favor of his younger brother, Yasuhira. He himself had never rebelled against the decision. It seemed to him right and natural, nor did he much care

to whom the title descended provided it remained among his own kith and kin. But his complaisance, being difficult to understand, was suspicious. His brothers could not believe him content, and finding fresh grounds for mistrust in his intimacy with the Minamoto exiles, they resolved to set the question at rest once and forever. An opportunity was easily found. On the hundredth day after Hidehira's death, when the family had assembled to perform due ceremonials, Yori-hira was treacherously seized and executed with all his children.

"Yoshitsune did not fail to perceive the bearing of that act upon his own fortunes. When setting out from Heian-jo three years previously, he had received from the Emperor an autograph letter empowering him to claim the armed assistance of the brothers Koreto and Koreyoshi, two of the most puissant nobles in the Island of the Nine Provinces. That



A FAMILY GROUP.



letter he now despatched southward with an explanation of his helpless condition and an account of the perils menacing him. Whether Yoshitsune was betrayed, or Yoritomo exceptionally well served, the letter fell into the latter's hands, and its import being misinterpreted and largely exaggerated, supplied Yoshitsune's enemies with a fresh pretext for urging his destruction. The *Shogun* desired to despatch an army northward without delay; but it was pointed out to him by Kagiwara and other not less astute commanders that such a proceeding would compel Yasuhira to espouse the proscribed man's cause, and that with Yoshitsune as their general the Oshiu troops might hold all Japan at bay for a century. It was resolved, therefore, to adopt a more subtle method. A delegate from the Court of Kamakura arrived in Oshiu, empowered to exchange the fief of Hitachi in perpetuity against the head of the Minamoto fugitive. Thus, before the days of mourning for Hidehira were completed, the things he had foretold came about.<sup>1</sup>

"Hidehira's death had taken place in the month of December, and in May of the following year his sons organized a hunting expedition on an exceptionally large scale. Yoshitsune was invited to join the party, and being as yet without any definite cause to distrust, he readily consented. He was ignorant of his own messenger's miscarriage as well as of the southern delegate's coming, and neither he nor his followers seem to have had any suspicion of treachery. But just as he rode out of Koromo-gawa a letter was placed in his hands. It

bore the signature of Motonari, Hidehira's father-in-law, and this was its purport:

"The dying prediction approaches its fulfilment: an envoy from Kamakura reached Oshiu five days ago. Your own ignorance of the event will enable you to divine the nature of his reception. In this hunting expedition you are yourself the quarry.

I pray that it be not



ACTORS IN COURT DRESS OF ANCIENT TIMES.

already too late for you to fly. Brother of the man<sup>2</sup> for whose sake your father died, and your fellow exile, I would follow you wherever you turn your steps, but that may not be,

<sup>1</sup> Hidehira on his deathbed had foretold that Yoshitsune's safety depended on the uncompromising rejection of all overtures from Kamakura.

<sup>2</sup> Nobuyori, whose feud with Kiyomori led to the downfall of the Genji.

seeing that my years now number more than three-score. May Hachiman guide you to some better fortune.'

"Yoshitsune read these words without betraying surprise or alarm. 'At home or at the hunt, it matters little which,' he said, as he turned back, 'the end is the same wherever it overtakes us.' Then summoning his sixteen liegemen, he read to them Motonari's letter, and caused Benkei to write this reply:

"If it were in my power to escape, I might persuade myself to make the attempt, in order that men should not be able to lay this crime to their charge whose father placed me under so large a debt of gratitude. But both I and my companions have had overmuch of flight and evasions. Neither in heaven nor earth is there any place whither the ban of proscription does not reach. Here, therefore, we shall await our fate whatever it may be, grieving only that we can neither repay your kindness nor profit by it.'

"To this resolution every one of the sixteen assented unhesitatingly. Since the end was inevitable, the remnant of their lives might be passed more comfortably where they were than in repeating the bitter experiences of bygone years. Nevertheless, for their leader's wife and child they would fain have devised some means of escape. Among the mountains of Nikkwo, where Saburo's youth had been spent, perhaps in the very place where Iné, Saburo's wife, had received her unknown visitor in the days when the future was bright, some retreat might still be found beyond the reach of vengeance and intrigue. For such a purpose as this Saburo could not but consent to survive his lord, and with him as escort the chances of successful flight did not seem small. But when this scheme was made known to Shigeko, she prayed with such earnestness not to be separated from her husband, that Yoshitsune could not find it in his heart to insist.

"Nothing therefore remained but to await the course of events with what patience they might. They did not attempt to make any preparations for defence, or even to devise a plan of action. It was tacitly understood that they should sell their lives as dearly as possible, and for the rest, they had fought side by side so often and in such sudden emergencies that to take any forethought now seemed scarcely necessary. Yoshitsune issued no directions, nor in any way changed his manner of life. One indication only of his purpose was afforded. He caused a number of fagots to be piled under the verandas of the main building, and desired that means to ignite them should be kept in constant readiness.

"On the morning of the third day after the receipt of Motonari's letter, the watchman reported the appearance of a large body of troops to the south of Koromo-gawa. They were advancing at a leisurely pace and evidently with no desire to conceal their approach, which, indeed, it would have been difficult to do, seeing that their numbers amounted to some fifteen thousand. Fully an hour, however, must still elapse before the head of the column came within bowshot, and in the interim the sixteen Minamoto soldiers assembled to take leave of their leader and one another. The ceremony was conducted after the simplest fashion and



without any display of emotion or any allusion to their impending fate. Benkei only, as he received the wine-cup from Yoshitsune's hands and drained it for the last time, said with his old jovial laugh: 'The varlets have done us much honor in measuring our strength at one to a thousand. May we have proved to them before we, comrades, meet again that their estimate was not mistaken!'

"Yoshitsune, who had not yet armed himself, now desired his followers to ascertain, if they might, who were the leaders of the attacking force. He did not believe it possible that Yasuhira and his brother could have persuaded themselves to conduct so nefarious an enterprise in person, and finding his conjecture correct, he declared his intention of abstaining altogether from the fight. He would not draw his sword for the last time, he said, against those who were only obeying the orders of their superiors, or receive his death-stroke at the



TEA HOUSE IN UENO PARK, TOKYO.

The principal park of the metropolis, famous for its temples and tombs of the Shoguns, and for its wonderful cherry blossoms.

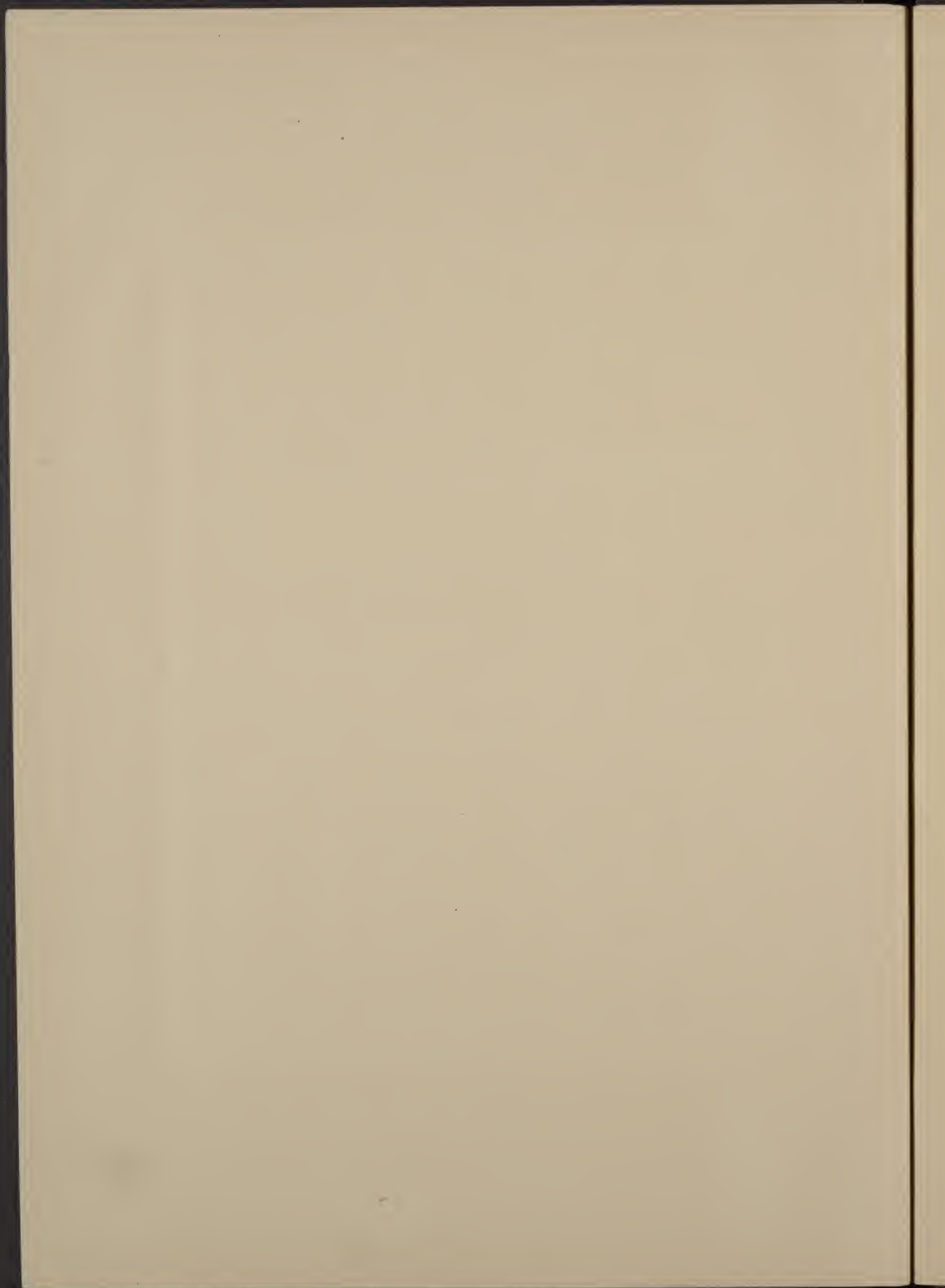
hands of men unworthy of his steel. The others did not attempt to turn him from his decision. They knew that it could not be otherwise, and one by one as they took their leave they asked his pardon for preceding him to the grave. Even now they did not hold any consultation about the disposition of their force. By a sort of tacit understanding fourteen mounted their horses and rode toward the gate, while the remaining two ascended to the roof of the main building and stood there sword in hand. Of these, one was the uncle of Yoshitsune's wife. He was the only man of their leader's kindred present in the castle, and the part<sup>1</sup> that devolved on him in this final drama made it necessary that he should remain at Yoshitsune's side to the last. When the fourteen issued from the courtyard, they found that the enemy's van was already within half a furlong of the portals. Had the ground been

<sup>1</sup> It would be his duty to act as *Kaishaku*, or headsman, when Yoshitsune committed suicide.

### MAT MAKERS.

The floors of all the living rooms in a Japanese house are covered with thick mats made of rushes closely woven. These mats are always of the same size, six feet by three feet, and practically form the unit of measurement in the construction of a dwelling; thus a room must be either a four, six, or eight mat room, or some multiple thereof. The mats taken from any house in Japan will therefore invariably fit any other house, so that a change of domicile entails no loss in refurnishing. There are several qualities of mats, the cheaper grades being soft and coarse, and the more expensive hard and fine. The surface becomes quite glossy with use, as shoes are never worn in the house, and there is no furniture to crush or mar the fibres. Except for harboring small insects the mats are very cleanly.











favorable for attack, such an overwhelming force as Yasuhira had sent must have borne down every obstacle and decided the contest forthwith. But the one road that led to the main gate was constructed along the crest of a bank falling away so rapidly on either side that it afforded scant footing for men in armor. Thus fourteen warriors, especially such warriors as these, were for the moment at no serious disadvantage. Their first onset not only cleared the causeway but left them free to retire at leisure to the shelter of the building, where they found themselves still unscathed, while the ground without was strewn with fallen foes. This alternation of mutual advance and retreat was continued for some time. If the Minamoto men really achieved that day a tithe of the deeds for which tradition gives them credit, the praise posterity has accorded them is still too feeble. There came a time, however, when of the whole fourteen only two made good their retreat to the gate. These two were Benkei and Saburo. The latter was still comparatively unscathed, but the former, in addition to many minor hurts, had received a gash in the neck sufficient to have disabled an ordinary man. Leaving his comrade to guard the gate, the glaivesman hurried off to warn those within that the fatal moment had at last come. Yoshitsune, dressed entirely in white, was reading a *sutra* in a distinct voice, while in the adjoining chamber, of which the doors were thrown open, his girl-wife sat, her head bowed upon her bosom and her baby sleeping on her knees.

"Benkei paused involuntarily on the threshold. The power of speech and action seemed to have deserted him, and it was not till Yoshitsune's quiet eyes had been fixed on his for some moments that he was able to falter: 'They are all gone. Saburo and I alone are left. He guards the portal, and I have come to see your face once more.'

" 'Then, Benkei, if so many good men await us at the foot of the Happy Mountains, it were bad to stay here. Strike home then once more, old friend and trusty comrade, for the noise of the battle sounds nearer, and, if my ear deceive me not, Saburo is in evil case even now.'

"The glaivesman dropped upon his knees, and saluting his chief for the last time, turned back to succor his companion. At first his feet faltered strangely and he groped his way like a blind man, but beyond the threshold his strength returned to him with redoubled vigor, for at that very instant he saw Saburo beaten to the ground by a rain of blows. He leaped out into the thick of the *mêlée*, and dealing such strokes that those who survived them fell back in bewilderment, raised the body of his dying comrade and carried it within the gate.

"It is related that for a long time after this Benkei single-handed held the gate against the whole of the enemy's force. He had broken the handle of his glaive short, so that he might use it more freely in his constrained position, and from above the pile of corpses that soon accumulated at his feet, the terrible weapon, whether by unerring foin or deadly sweep, bore down all that came within its range. His body was covered with wounds and a dozen arrows had pierced the points of his armor; but to the end none could discover any diminu-



tion of his strength, so that his assailants began to ask one another whether they were pitted against a man or a god. At last there came a lull in the combat. Barb and blade seemed powerless to overcome the giant, and his adversaries, ashamed of their discomfiture, were preparing a new method of assault. Four men armed with iron balls and chains, to be thrown after the fashion of a lasso, advanced behind each other along the causeway. The first two were content to forfeit their lives in the attempt, but the others would scarcely fail to entangle the glaivesman's limbs and so hamper him that he might no longer resist. Benkei, meanwhile, appeared to take no notice whatever of this impending danger. Supported in part by the handle of his glaive, in part by the portal against which he leaned, he remained perfectly motionless, nor even changed his position when the leader of the four poised his weapon for a cast. Deftly thrown, the ball passed over his right shoulder, and whirling round and round, coiled its pendent chain tightly about his arm. Then suddenly he lurched forward and fell heavily to the ground. He had died where he stood, unconquered and unconquerable.

"The assailants now surged pell-mell into the building, from which smoke and flame were issuing in dense volumes. They found Yoshitsune lying dead, his hands laid upon the corpses of his wife and child. A little more, and the fire would have achieved its purpose, for the book he had been reading was half consumed, and it was with no little pains that they succeeded in carrying out his body."

Nevertheless the fact that Yoshitsune died at Koromo-gawa has long been doubted in Japan, and the doubt has grown stronger and assumed more definite shape in recent years. It was first authoritatively recorded in a history (*Dai-Nihon-shi*) compiled by distinguished scholars in the seventeenth century. These annalists pointed out that a head sent from Oshiu to Kamakura during the heat of summer, and not examined until it had been lying in *saké* for forty-three days, could not have been identified with any approach to assurance. That is undeniable. They further recorded a general belief that Yoshitsune escaped to Yezo, and they noted that the Ainu in that island revered his name and had built a shrine to his memory. That, too, is undeniable. There is also evidence, apparently credible, that from Yezo Yoshitsune ultimately crossed over to Tartary. Nothing, indeed, seems less likely than that such a man would have remained inactive in such a place as Yezu during the thirty or forty years of life naturally remaining to him when, in 1189, at thirty-one years of age, he fled from Oshiu. But between the mere facts that Yoshitsune did not die at Koromo-gawa, and that he subsequently made his way to Tartary, between these facts and the establishment of his identity with Genghis Khan, there is a long interval. What are the steps by which it is crossed? There is, first, the coincidence of time and age. If Yoshitsune found his way to the continent, it was in the closing years of the twelfth century, when he had attained the age of from thirty-one to forty. Precisely at that epoch and of the same age the figure of Genghis began to be prominent in the district near the sources of the Amur river.

It is singular that Genghis, supposing him to have lived among the Tartars from his childhood, and supposing him to have been gifted with the extraordinary qualities that made him the conqueror of nearly the whole of Asia, should have passed the period of middle life without striking even one of the blows that afterwards rang from end to end of the Orient. Such tardiness of active ambition differentiates him from all the other great captains of the world. Then, in the second place, there is a similarity, almost an identity, of names. Here the fact must be recalled that the Tartars had no written script. For everything connected with their early annals we have to depend solely upon tradition, and there is no difficulty in detecting that fiction and romance had much to do with the tradition relating to the origin of Genghis. Had the names of his reputed father, of the man himself and of his chief generals been pure Mongol words, they would probably have escaped mutilation in the process of oral transmission from generation to generation, but if they were foreign, some mutilation would have been more than likely. The name of the great conqueror's father is said to have been "Yessugai," apparently a slightly corrupted form of "Yezo-kai," or the sea of Yezo. Genghis himself, before he assumed the name by which the world knows him, is said to have been called "Temujin."

A very probable hypothesis is that Yoshitsune would have made his *début* on the continent under an assumed name. "Tenjin" is the name under which the celebrated Michizane was deified. Between the careers of Michizane and Yoshitsune there is a striking analogy. Both were distinguished by eminent talents and signal public services; both were traduced by rivals, and both were unjustly exiled. It is difficult to conceive any pseudonym which Yoshitsune would have been more likely to choose than "Tenjin."

Another suggestion is that he called himself "Tengu-jin" in allusion to the popular fancy that his remarkable skill in fence had been derived from the teaching of the King of the *Tengu*. Then, the clan at the head of which "Temujin" made his first conquests was the "Nirongoun," and the meaning of the word is said to have been "children of the sun." The little band of men that followed



ARTISTS PAINTING A PORTRAIT.

Easels are not used by Japanese artists, the work being done on the floor and without the aid of a mahl stick.



Yoshitsune from Oshiu and received an accession of strength in Yezo before crossing to the continent, were "Nihon-jin" (Japanese), or men from the land of the rising sun. When "Temujin" began to acquire dominant military power, he called himself "Genghis-khan;" or, to speak more correctly, he assumed a name which tradition calls "Genghis-khan." Yoshitsune was a scion of the Minamoto. His family name was "Gen," and the name of his clan, "Genji," or "Genke." "Gen" is, in fact, the alternative pronunciation of "Minamoto." Moreover, "Minamoto Yoshitsune" has for its alternative sound "Gen Gikei." Further, the word "Kian," or "Khan," is traditionally alleged to have meant "running water." "Gen," or "Minamoto," signifies "water source." A Chinese historian says that Genghis-khan was "Yuan Yi-king," and writes the name with the ideographs which, according to the ordinary Japanese rendering, would be read "Minamoto Yoshitsune." The wife of Genghis-khan had the title of "Fudjin." "Fujin" is the term applied to a married lady in Japan. Two of the principal generals of Genghis, sent by him to invade Persia and southern Europe, were called, according to tradition, "Subtai" and "Shuppi." The two principal followers of Yoshitsune were Saito Benkei and Washi-no-o Saburo. Between "Saito" and "Subtai" the resemblance is sufficiently evident, and "Shuppi" is the alternative sound of "Washi-no-o." Genghis is said to have given the name "Manchu" to the district over which he first acquired sway on the continent. "Manchu" is the alternative pronunciation of "Mitsunaka," Yoshitsune's princely ancestor.

These are certainly remarkable coincidences, difficult to ascribe to mere accident. If they have any value as establishing the identity of Genghis and Yoshitsune, then they also go to prove that the present Manchu rulers of China are of Japanese origin. Now, a passage transcribed by a Japanese author from a Chinese encyclopædia at the end of the eighteenth century attributes to the great Chinese Emperor Chien-lung (1736-1795) a statement which, read according to the Japanese sounds of the ideographs employed, is this: "My family name is *Gen*. I am a descendant of Yoshitsune, whose ancestor was Seiwa. Hence we call our dynasty *Sei*, and our family *Gen*." Yoshitsune was, in fact, a descendant of the Emperor Seiwa. The family to which he belonged was known in Japan as *Seiwa Genji*.

In the legends connected with Genghis there are many points that seem to constitute connecting links between the story of the Japanese hero and that of the Asiatic conqueror; but we have already pursued the subject so far that this branch of it must be dismissed with reference to two identifications only. The first is that Genghis always fought under a white banner, and that the flag of the Minamoto was white, whereas their rivals and enemies, the Taira, carried a red pennant. The second is that the mother of Genghis is said to have been found by her future husband in the snow, and to have played a brave part in saving Genghis from political extinction in his early years; a tradition that bears a striking resemblance to Tokiwa's flight through the snow with Yoshitsune in her arms.

Annalists have concerned themselves little about these matters, yet for every student

of Asiatic history they possess keen interest. Closer research may disclose clearer traces. Even in Japan the belief that Yoshitsune died at Koromo-gawa remained popular until after the Restoration of 1867, when a call for documents relating to the titles of the various fiefs led to the discovery of a scroll among the Tsugaru archives, from which it appeared that Yoshitsune had found a temporary refuge in that extreme northwesterly district of the main island, and had subsequently escaped to Yezo. The scroll added that a follower of Yoshitsune, by name Hirosawa, who bore a close resemblance to his chief, sacrificed his life in order that his head might be sent to Kamakura for identification as that of Yoshitsune.

Yoritomo's conduct toward Yoshitsune has been execrated by historians. Judged by the standards of modern morality, it deserves execration. To Yoshitsune's exploits in the field Yoritomo owed much of his own ascendancy. He recompensed his brother's splendid services by sending a secret agent to assassinate him; he drove him, an exile, from Kyoto; he proscribed him throughout the length and breadth of the land, and he pursued him with implacable rancor even to his quiet retreat in the far north. It is a black record. But has it been read impartially? We may well inquire

whether the romantic incidents of Yoshitsune's early career, the brilliancy of his martial achievements, and the sadness of his fate have not blinded posterity to some of the underlying facts of the story. Yoshitsune was not Yoritomo's real brother; he was only his half brother. In the days when this tragedy of fraternal pitilessness occurred, ties of consanguinity snapped easily under the strain of ambition. The battle that preceded the death of Yoritomo's two brothers and his father, and involved the temporary ruin of his clan, had furnished a lurid illustration of the unnatural temper of the time.

That Yoshitsune should have conspired against Yoritomo would have revolted the conscience of the era as little as it had been revolted by twenty previous instances of family feuds. The brothers had been separated for twenty years when the elder raised his standard in Izu and struck his first blow against the Taira. They were virtually strangers. No



PILGRIM CARRYING SHRINE.

Religious pilgrimages are thus made by the poorer class who visit the numerous temples throughout Japan, subsisting on alms or peddling.



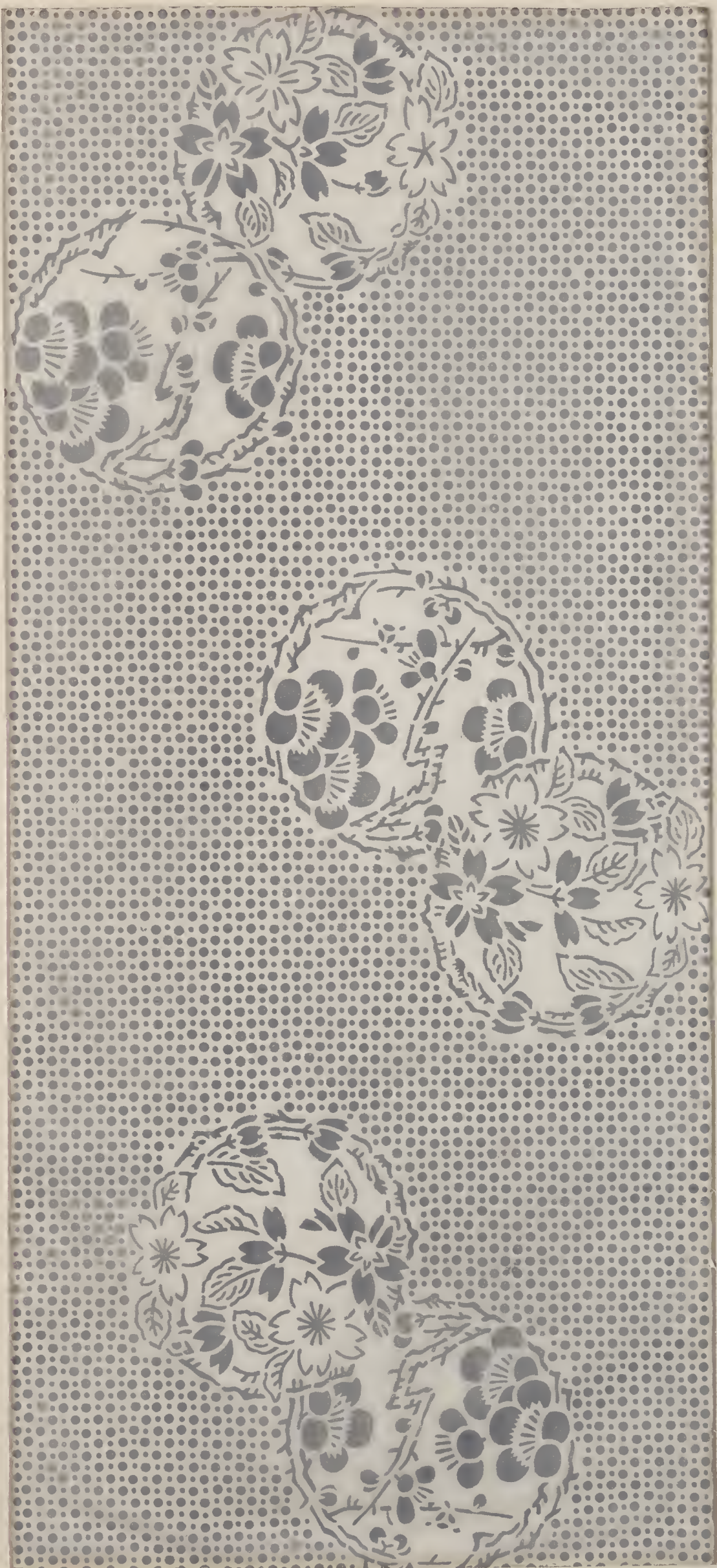
personal reasons for mutual trust existed. Then arrived a day when Yoritomo, engaged in the comparatively unnoticed and inconspicuous task of organizing the Kamakura administration, heard that Yoshitsune had become the centre of popular admiration in Kyoto; that his victories were the wonder of the nation, and that he stood high in favor at the Imperial Court. At the same time, Yoritomo learned from Kajiware, one of his most trusted captains, whom he had sent to superintend the operations of the campaign, that Yoshitsune was plotting against Kamakura. There was no difficulty in crediting the charge; it exactly fitted the situation. Historians are agreed that Kajiware's accusation rested on no basis of fact and had its origin in the personal jealousy of the accuser. They may be right, but Yoritomo thought differently, and so thinking, tried to compass Yoshitsune's death. The secret despatch of an assassin on such an errand was a foul act, according to modern canons. According to the canons of the twelfth century, it merited no opprobrium. Thereafter Yoshitsune stood forth as his brother's open enemy, and events moved in practically inevitable sequence. The epoch when the foundations of military feudalism were laid in Japan has been described by some writers as an era of chivalry, of doughty deeds and of self-sacrificing loyalty. Examples in support of that description can certainly be culled in abundance from the annals; but so too can equally numerous evidences that the elementary passions of human nature had wide sway.



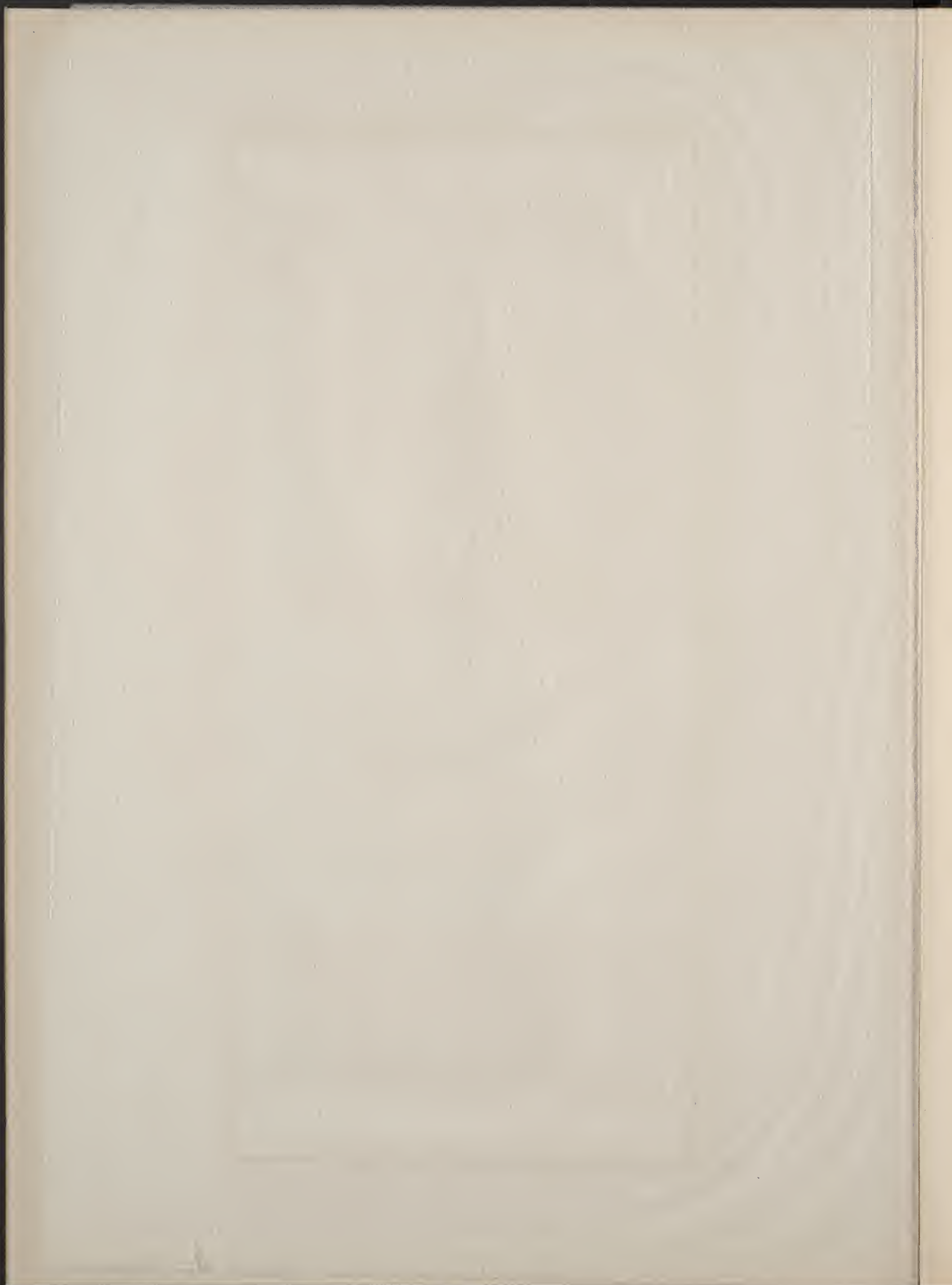
JAPANESE DOGS.

Kuku and Ocho, residing in Yokohama. Eleven inches long, six inches high, weighing about two pounds each.















A PAINTING OF THE KAMAKURA EPOCH.

TWELFTH CENTURY.



## A PAINTING OF THE KAMAKURA EPOCH.

TWELFTH CENTURY.

The delusion of the Fujiwaras could not last forever. Outside the gates of Kyoto a storm was slowly gathering, which swept their festival of flowers to the four winds. The real power of the realm fell into the hands of the military class, who for generations ruled the provinces in the name of the court nobles. Despised and unrecognized at the capital, their affections and interests took root in local chieftainship, thus forming the basis of feudal tenure. Occasions were not long wanting to disclose the impotence of the over-refined aristocracy. The rebellion of Masakado, who aspired to imperial dignity in his sham palace of Soma; the piratical depredations of Sumitomo along the southern coast; the controversies of the turbulent clergy, who asked for judgment at the palace gate, armed, and several thousand strong; the disputes of Adzuma-ebisu, eastern barbarians, who generally evaded the imposition of state revenues, all called forth the energies of the martial class, which came to be divided under the leaderships of the two principal houses of Taira and Minamoto, according to their influences in Southern and Northern Japan. The rivalry and feud between these great families, intensified by the disputes about the imperial succession, the temporary ascendancy of the Tairas, who entirely supplanted the Fujiwaras but imitated their weakness, the rise of the almost extinct Minamoto race in the east, and the final overthrow of their hereditary enemy, forms an interesting epic familiar to readers of Japanese history. Our minstrels still awaken the *biwa* to sing of their tender tragedies, of the Empress who sunk into the waves with the Holiest of the Imperial Treasures, of the gallant knight who on the field of victory vowed to become a monk to pray for his vanquished enemy, of crimes veiled by loyalty, and love chilled by religion. It was truly the age of Romance with all its darkness,—a mirage of the mediæval chivalry without its woman-worship, but perhaps more of manly devotion.

Kamakura was founded in 1186, by Yoritomo, head of the Minamoto house after its supremacy was established. Far from Kyoto and situated in the midst of the northeastern provinces, where his family influence was hereditarily predominant, Kamakura inaugurated an age of military candor and discipline. The new barons, who hastened to profess allegiance to Yoritomo, despised the cultured details of Kyoto routine, which perhaps they could not understand. Law and feudal administration were promulgated in simple and broad terms, to which the successors of the Shogunate or the crafty Hojos, who wielded the real power, adhered. Literature was scarcely encouraged, and the religious reformers developed simpler versions than their predecessors. The Great Shinran promised salvation through a call on the name of Buddha, and the energetic Nichiren preached in the market place, urging men to recite the title of the Scripture of Lotus-flower, which alone sufficed to erase the sins of the world. The horrors of hell, which the learned clergy of Kyoto refrained from depicting to the delicate Fujiwaras, were now unsparingly disclosed to the terrified public.

The artists of the period seemed to delight in drawing the scenes of retribution. The Kitano Roll, commonly attributed to Nobuzane, is a monument of this style, and the Roll of Hell, commonly ascribed to Mitsunaga (end of the twelfth century), from which we reproduce the accompanying plate, also shows the same spirit. The god Gandarva has just decapitated the various beasts, emblems of sin and lust, which he is going to pierce again with his lance. The treatment shows a great contrast with the preceding work.

Okakura Kakuzo







